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ANGELA.

A Novel.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"EMILIA WYNDHAM," "TWO OLD MEN'S TALES," ETC.

[by Mrs. Anne Caldwell Marsh.]

* * * * *

No common object to your sight displays,
But what with pleasure Heaven itself surveys:
A brave heart struggling with the storms of fate.

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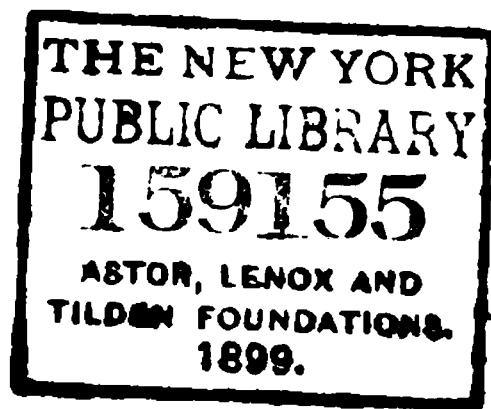
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MADE IN
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TO
A GENEROUS PUBLIC,
AND TO
THOSE GENEROUS CRITICS

WHOSE INDULGENCE HAS LED THEM TO OVERLOOK SO MANY
FAULTS, IN FAVOR OF A FEW SIMPLE TOUCHES AND
HONEST SENTIMENTS,

THESE PAGES ARE, WITH MUCH EARNEST FEELING,

Dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

ANGELA.

CHAPTER I.

The best of men have ever loved repose :
They hate to mingle in the filthy fray ;
Where the soul sours and gradual rancor grows,
Imbitter'd more from peevish day to day.
Song of the Wizard : Castle of Indolence.

WHAT a casket of treasures is this our little island !

How imperfect an idea have those who merely travel upon its great roads—passing from one huge town to another, over districts every one has learned by rote—of the infinite, almost inexhaustible beauties, to be found hidden in the more secluded parts of our sweet country !

What lovely rural valleys ! what sweetly winding, transparent brooks ! what dark, wood-crowned hills ! what lawns and fields, and deer-parks and old gardens ! and, above all, what curious old edifices, what treasures of relics of the times gone by, lie hid in those tranquil and retired districts which neither great London roads nor great metropolitan railways have traversed !

People run about the continent and visit every church, and palace, and old ruin, haunted by the memory of the past, or rich with the rare art of the wondrous middle ages, and they neglect those records of the gone-by history and the departed worthies of their own country, with which this our island teems.

Less than fifty miles from London, for instance, amid the beech-woods of Buckinghamshire—those lovely romantic valleys, where the noise, and bustle, and hurry, and confusion of *progress* have not yet penetrated, but where the silent fields, the glassy brooks, the toppling hawthorn-hedges, are as when Izaak Walton sat and trolled for pike, or flung his fly for chub or perch, while the milkmaid

tripped across the flowery meadow, singing as she went—even in Buckinghamshire, so near London as that, who ever thinks of making a pilgrimage to visit the residence and worship the relics of Hampden?

Of John Hampden!

One has got into a habit of associating with the idea of patriot, that of a restless, new made, very rich (or, still oftener, very poor), man of yesterday, very much dissatisfied because it is impossible to make yesterday half-a-dozen centuries old; because it is impossible to tame that wild, indomitable thing, the poetic imagination of man, so as to make him esteem the offspring of smoking steam-engines or metropolitan counting-houses in the same light that he will and must do the descendant of a line of saints and sages, or even the descendant of a long line of peers and princes—yes, for peers and princes, even though they were not saints and sages, so they were respectable, honorable gentlemen and soldiers, *will* lay hold of the human imagination. Now, because the man of wealth of yesterday, or the poor adventurer who has neither wealth, nor birth, nor even talent in the eyes of any one but himself, can not wrest this his possession from the long-descended, we find him very apt to become excessively out of humor with the existing order of things, and very likely to turn patriot.

An observation, you will say, as old as the hills. I believe so. It is a fact to be gathered from human society that never name has been so falsified, so prostituted, so misapplied, as that most noble, venerable name of Patriot has been.

Till like the sacred cross, the emblem of all that is noble in man's destiny, or tender in his heart, which cruelty and wickedness have used as a symbol—till goodness and piety have learned to look even upon it with feelings approaching to horror—the name of Patriot has become only a signal for suspicion, distrust, and contempt—as a mere masquerade habit, or worse.

The *Patriot*!

When I heard the steward at Great Hampden use the word, it seemed at once restored to the full force of its primitive meaning.

Yes, there I stood in the halls of that great patriot, who dared singly to lift up his voice against the encroachments of power, but who, gifted with qualities still more valuable than the generous courage which prompted the act, had the far-seeing wisdom to discern what in that small seed—that *principle*—lay undisclosed; the mighty consequences to the future destiny of a great people involved in that simple question, whether he, the lord of thousands of acres,

should or should not pay a few pounds unconstitutionally demanded from him.

No one can look round upon those halls—no one, from the windows of that fine house, that house of the old English gentleman, can cast his eye over the domain—no one can read the rent-roll of estates possessed before the Norman crossed the seas, and held unto this day by those of Hampden blood—still less, no one can look upon the mild countenance of the great champion, or read the record of his *domestic* heart in the tribute composed by himself to the wife he loved—no one can do this, unless indeed he be a being of no reflection at all, but must feel with a force unknown before the immensity of the sacrifice made by this man.

This man, surrounded by all that wealth can bestow, living in the noble, patriarchal dignity which in those days attached to the possessor of large, ancient estates, united to a loved and revered wife, with his children rising around him—this man, who stood forward and almost alone to affront the full force of royal indignation, in times when royal indignation was indeed, as the cant phrase is, a *fact*, and one of the most formidable facts with which a man could possibly bring himself in contact.

The house stands upon a lofty eminence, and is seen at some distance at the head of a long *strath*, as it would be called in Scotland, rather than avenue, opening between the beech-woods—it may be, half a mile long. It was made, if I recollect aright, to commemorate the visit of Queen Elizabeth. The windows command the deep valley in which stands the town of Amersham, some six miles lower down. The hills around are very steep and abrupt, for you are approaching the great chalk district, and they are clothed with thick woods of beech. When I was there, it was July, the most unfavorable time possible for scenery where the beech prevails; but I thought it, nevertheless, a noble picture.

The mansion is of various constructions, some, probably, preceding the Conquest. The more modern part, consisting of some fine apartments, was built by Sir Griffiths Hampden, in order to receive Queen Elizabeth. We think it a royal compliment now to refurnish apartments to receive a sovereign; in those days, it appears, they erected them.

These halls, and saloons, and libraries, and galleries, are filled with the memorials of grandeur gone by. Old pictures, rather curious than otherwise valuable; old tapestried chairs, old tables, and cupboards, and wardrobes, and screens; old china in profusion, and quaint old glass.

A magnificent black-letter Bible—the family Bible of Oliver Cromwell's uncle; Richard Cromwell, I think, was his name—among other interesting things, lies in the library. In the first page he has entered the names of his nine children, their dates of birth, and the names of their godfathers and godmothers; among these, figure that of the Lady Anne Cromwell and that of William Crompton, of that ancient and respectable Puritan family, one of whom afterward bore his testimony to conscience by suffering ejection under Charles II. from the great church of St. Werburgh, at Derby. A fine full-length of Cromwell is over the staircase; a characteristic head of Thurloe, and various other interesting portraits, which I pass over to come to the curious legend of the one of John Hampden himself. I said, how soft was the expression of this great and determined man's countenance!

The portrait had long remained fixed in a panel of one of the walls; there was no superscription to it, and tradition was doubtful as to whose portrait it might be. The tomb of John Hampden, in the chancel, was opened; upon what occasion, or for what reason, I am ignorant, but the present steward was there. Upon uncovering the coffin, the great man was found lying as if he had been but just deposited there—imperishable as his renown, fresh as if he were indeed but of yesterday.

The expression of the face was so perfectly preserved, that the resemblance with the unknown portrait in the panel was immediately discernible. The long, fair, abundant hair, was turned up over the head, bound by a black ribbon, under which a small red worm had begun its silent ravages; thus proving that even the illustrious John Hampden was but dust, and must, like his mortal brethren, call the worm his sister.

The proprietor of the mansion—a lineal descendant of John Hampden's youngest daughter—ordered the picture to be taken out of the panel, in order to its being carefully cleaned and framed. When removed, there was found written at the back of it, "John Hampden," and the name of the painter, a German; but which the steward had forgotten.

Alas, for the noblest and longest unbroken line! Maniacs, or fools, or cowards, will, somewhere or other, intrude to disgrace it. The grandson of Hampden, almost the last male descendant of this venerable house, has his portrait there. A gloomy, melancholy, atrabilious face it is. He was in an office of confidence under the government—a defaulter—and died by his own hand.

Who was his mother?

The world should ask and know.

Not such a woman as the one whom her illustrious husband, by a tablet, the inscription upon which is from his own pen, has thus commemorated—

“To the Eternal Memory of the truly virtuous and pious Elizabeth Hampden, wife of John Hampden, of Great Hampden, Esquyer, sole daughter and heir of Edward Sympson of Pyrton, in the county of Oxon, Esquyer.

“The tender mother of an happy offspring in 9 hopefull children. In her pilgrimage, the staie and comfort of her neighbours; the joye and glorie of a well-ordered family; the delight and happinesse of tender parents; a crowne and blessinge to her husbände in a wyfe. To all an eternal patterne of goodnesse and cause of joye. Whilst she was,

In her Dissolution,

a losse invaluable to each, yett herself blest, and they fully recompensed in her translation from a tabernacle of claye and fellowshippe with mortalls to a celestiale mansion and communion with a Deity, the 21st daie of August, 1634.

“John Hampden, her sorrowfull Husband, in perpetuall memory of his conjugall love, hath

dedicated this
Monument.”

Such were the worthies of those days, and such their wives.

Such was the fruit of a pious and somewhat severe education; of dignity without luxury, economy without parsimony, strong affections without romantic sentiment, housewifely care without narrowness of spirit, domestic discipline and order, piety to parents, reverence of husbands, a large charity, and a serious devotion to God.

Such the result when life was viewed, not as a French romance, but as a grave and earnest tale, of which the catastrophe was eternal weal or woe.

Of such stuff were the Puritan fathers of English modern history made; whom a skeptical Scotch philosopher—that late, though not too late, the world is beginning to rate at his just value—has, by his flippant and superficial ridicule, taught the youth of England to dislike and despise.

Hume's will be ever a great name in our literature; but he is beginning to be stripped of many attributes too carelessly bestowed, and which have given him, so far, too great an influence in the formation of our men.

His history will, in all probability, ever remain *the* English history *par excellence*; but it is proper it should be read with a *caveat*.

We open with these slight allusions to our heroic times, to contrast them with our own modern days, to which we now descend.

He who sits, or rather reposes, under that wild, straggling hawthorn, where the huge twisted branches, hoary with age, have assumed almost the character of those of a forest tree, and yet which, in spite of its extreme antiquity, is still covered with a profusion of its ever-beautiful white flowers—he who sits under that tree, his deep, serious, enthusiastic eyes gazing upon the prospect before him—he, the inhabitant of the present world, but the child of one long, long gone by—he who was born at least two centuries too late, had that within him, had it but been developed, worthy of those heroic days which the false coloring of the great historian had taught, even him—lofty, chivalric, generous, as his nature was—to misconceive and dislike.

In him that strife within, common to all earnest and enthusiastic natures, was perhaps more painful, more distracting, than with most others, for his imagination was peculiarly strong, his heart deeply fervent; but the same strife and contest which he was maintaining between true, earnest, serious nature, and the frivolity and emptiness of the actual life, is, as I have said, more or less, every day going on amid the young hearts just bursting into life around us.

The teens! that beautiful, mysterious portion of the life of man! when he is born as it were again to a new existence; when the sweet dream of infancy is over and all its brilliant flowers are faded; when a sense of a higher meaning in the things of this world—a deep reaching of the spirit after the hidden life behind this varied curtain—a stretching forth of the soul toward the lofty, the generous, the heroic—those whisperings of the heart which tell of a higher destiny preparing, of something grand to be achieved, some great and noble end answered by this existence—this mind, this soul, now first surrendered as it were into our own hands, reveals itself. The teens! sacred interval before the prosaic, oft-told tale has begun, while life is yet to the young clear eye that which poetry is or should be,—“A more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety, than can be found in the nature of things.”

The teens! Oh, what a gush of promise is there in that first burst of fervent life into flower! But the wind of the desert has passed over the blossoms, and where are they?

What is the summer to this spring?

Alas! alas!

Most deeply, deeply pathetic sight!

He was like the rest of them, dear, earnest, delightful young creatures; only he was of a more than commonly excitable nature, and circumstances had favored, or rather, perhaps, not favored him. The growth of these fine qualities had been more unchecked, more exuberant, with him than with the generality, and therefore the freezing influence of actual life had been more fatal and destructive than in the average of cases.

We all know what happens in vegetable life. That life which is a poetic fable, a type and fanciful tracery of our own.

He was a tall, fine young man—not very tall, neither, for he was beautifully proportioned—a very model—the very ideal of the English youth. His eye so sweet, so ingenuous, so almost child-like in its truth and innocence, yet so deep, so thoughtful, so full of indistinct meaning and hidden melancholy; his mouth was rather full, and the soft, silken moustache just gave character to the upper lip. His hair waved carelessly about his head, and fell beautifully from his fair and finely-developed forehead; but his brow was the remarkable feature—there was a character of thought and reflection almost in it far beyond his years.

He lay—lounged, I should say—under this old, twisted hawthorn-tree, upon a bank covered with that green branching moss which is so soft and so beautiful; and the harebell, and the lichens, and the little white starwort, were growing, with a few lingering primroses and violets, in the shaw which stretched behind and beside him. This hawthorn-tree stood out by itself a little in front of the shaw, which stretched along the field upon that side in front of a very high and thick hedge of hawthorn and maple, traveler's-joy and brambles, honeysuckles and eglantine, such as our youth loved in his heart. He had wandered, it would seem, beyond the limits of his father's wide and neglected deer-park, and had got among the fields and hedge-rows of some of the outlying farms.

He loved the lawns, and glades, and ferny brakes, and rough copses, and noble trees, and crouching deer of that wild forest of a park; but he loved the fields perhaps even still better, and the fields were new in their glory.

Such a month of May it had been! It was just now sinking into June. Such a profusion of flowers as there were this year! And this hawthorn-hedge before which he was now sitting, it actually perfumed the air!

He was not too old yet to enjoy nature with that exquisite sense of completeness with which youth is privileged, before the passions have lifted up their deep voices, and told of mysteries and interests,

beside which the mere worship of natural beauty is a blank. They were stirring within him, it is true, those strong passions; their low and confused murmurs were making themselves heard, but it was yet but as the breath of a deep mysterious voice in harmony with all around him,

Those heavens above, this earth beneath, this wooing breeze, that voice of birds! The gentle air was softly sailing over the silky waving of the long grass, or green and billowy corn-fields; the distant noise of the villages, and the stable clock in the castle striking one, were heard, the sound of the bell slowly swinging from among the woods which lay before him.

He had a volume of classic poetry in his hand, for he was a true and enthusiastic lover of the pure classic muse; but he read German, and Italian, and French, and Spanish; and he was deeply versed in the poetry of his own land: his memory was a rich treasure stored with the most beautiful images.

He was quite alone where he sat, and he would be quite alone when he returned home; he would not have one single being to speak to except the steward, or maybe the old Scotch gardener, or Mrs. Penrose, the housekeeper, or any little urchin or rosy little girl whom he might chance upon, and who might happen to hit his fancy; so he had plenty of time to enjoy himself, to indulge his passion for nature and for reverie, and to lounge about as suited the indolence of a most energetic temperament. Which contradiction in terms I leave to you, my most perspicacious reader, to make out the meaning of, knowing very well what I intend myself, but thinking you may, perhaps, consider it as an insult to your understandings if I attempt to explain.

He had been at Sherington three weeks all by himself, and he had not felt one single instant of *ennui*.

He *was* a singular young man!

Another contradiction—for I just now said he was very like all other young men; or they were, or would be, rather, like him, if the world would let them alone: but I ought to have explained that I meant they had faint perceptions and indistinct intimations of those emotions, tastes, and desires which were all predominant with him.


You can not think how this young man hated fashionable assemblies, London parties, rides in the Park, talks with young ladies *à l'amazone* with becoming riding-hats and veils, and sweet conventional smiles, and little insipid flatteries, and little *soupçons* of affectation—for no young ladies are really and positively affected now—they are only just not quite simple and natural. He did not trouble himself

with inquiring why he disliked all this so much; he never abused London, or said impertinent things of the young ladies; he thought it all very tiresome, that was all. He hated flirting, he disliked waltzing, and disliked set dinners. He very seldom, except at a few privileged tables, heard any thing said or talked about that interested him in the least degree; nobody seemed to care really very much for Horace, and Homer, and Spenser, and Shakspeare, and Dante, and Goethe, but himself; though the young ladies were quite ready to talk about that, or any thing else he pleased. But then he would have liked it so much better if he had been obliged to try to please *them*. They were so sweet-tempered, and so obliging, and so easy, and so accessible, it is impossible to guess why he did not like it all the better; but he never asked himself even that question: he did not care enough about it even to examine his own self upon the subject, but he was delighted when he could escape; and he had been as happy as a king, as any king of fairy tale—who must be *the* king of the proverb—when he could get away.

And most especially when, as now, he could get away to Sherington—dear, deserted, wild, neglected Sherington—which he loved as the apple of his eye.

Neglected, indeed, it was, and had been; the owners had not lived in it for years. His father and mother loved to live abroad; partly because that portion of their income which mortgage following mortgage in dreary succession did not quite absorb, was not nearly sufficient for the expense of living in England, in their position in society, and partly because they both loved the life abroad; the one for the artistical, imaginative, easy character of continental life, the other for reasons less excusable—the facility with which he could indulge his taste for play and idle company, without the restraints and bother of pompous, luxurious England. They were negligent people—negligent of all their serious duties, and, among others, of their duties to their son.

They never appeared to reflect that their son was, some time or other, to be an English peer; and that he ought to acquire English habits, and early mingle in English society; though, it is true, he had spent a short time at Eton, and had dawdled away a term or two at Oxford, but his manner of life had been so desultory, and he had lived so many years without a regular home, indulging a rather peculiar and most imaginative temperament, that he was in danger of growing up a fine and beautiful, but rather useless being—a great deal too refined and delicate for the ordinary purposes of that life and that society to which he was destined by his birth and station.



And they seemed quite to forget, that to be different from the rest of the world, even though you are above it, is a very doubtful good ; and that the *tanto buon che val niente* conveys quite as much sound good meaning as most proverbs and old saws do.

CHAPTER II.

Said—shall we take this pathway for our guide ?
Upward it winds.

How much influence women exercise in society ! They need not busy and bestir themselves to increase it, the responsibility under which they lie is heavy enough as it is.

It is a trite remark this ; but I wish that all women could be brought conscientiously to reflect, as some few of them certainly do, upon the account they shall be able to render for the power they do, or might have, exercised.

To say nothing of that brief, but despotic sway which every woman possesses over the man in love with her—a power immense, unaccountable, incalculable ; but in general so evanescent as but to make a brilliant episode in the tale of life—how almost immeasurable is the influence exercised by wives, sisters, friends, and, most of all, by mothers !

Upon the mother perhaps, most of all, the destiny of the man, as far as human means are to be regarded, depends. Fearful responsibility ! and by too many mothers how carelessly, how thoughtlessly, how frivolously, how almost wickedly, is the obligation discharged ! How carelessly, at the very outset, is the young child left in the nursery, abandoned to the management and training of, at best, an ignorant, inefficient nurse ; or too often far, far worse, to an unprincipled or interested one ! From these imperfect influences, to say the very best of them, at times assisted by those of the footman, groom, and other inhabitants of the stable-yard, to be at once handed over to the chance direction of a school—chance direction, I say, for in the very best of schools so much must necessarily depend upon chance—upon chances of observation upon the part of the master—chance companions—chance temptations—chance impressions—that without a most serious and correct attention to the guiding influences from home, the boy is left exposed to all sorts of false directions, some of which it is almost certain he will follow.

Thus he grows up to be a man, imperfect and contradictory ; his moral character unformed—his aspirations ill directed—his temper undisciplined—his principles unsettled. He enters life an ill-trained steed ; and the best that can be hoped for him is that the severe lash of disappointment, contradiction, and suffering, will, during the course of his career, supply the omissions of his youth, and train him at last, through much enduring, to that point from which a good education would have started him.

I think many parents do not sufficiently reflect when they send their boys to school upon what the purpose of a school is, and upon what a rational being ought to expect from it. The school is intended to prepare the man for his *external* life, to capacitate him for the world's business ; for all that has to do with active communication between fellow men it deals—and it can deal only with out-sides. No master, however sedulous, can know much beyond the exterior of his pupils, or can have leisure or opportunity to attend to those finer influences from within, which it is the parent's part to understand and to direct. The inner life—that which, in fact, is the *man*—must be drawn from those on whose early tenderness the physical life depended. No one but the son knows how great are the influences the mother possesses over his heart ; no one but the mother, perhaps, perfectly knows and understands the son.

The fine youth who lay under the old hawthorn-tree, looking down upon the noble domain of his forefathers, which lay stretched out upon the hills opposite to him, had been fortunate and unfortunate in his mother.

His mother was a woman of an ardent and enthusiastic temperament, and was considered by all who knew her as a person of very superior abilities ; and, certainly, she possessed some brilliant faculties, but dashed with much vanity, much worldliness and a good deal of selfish calculation beneath all. She had received a very liberal, not to say classical, education.

She read Horace, and she read Homer, in their originals ; and she had studied Quintilian and Cicero ; and in her own language, Bacon, and Locke, and Hartley, and Mill : which studies ought to have strengthened and disciplined her too exuberant fancy, and rendered her as solid and as sound as she was brilliant and dazzling. But, unfortunately, instead of this, they had only rendered her natural gifts the more dangerous, as they had filled her with the persuasion that a person who had read such very wise books must, of necessity, become very wise, and that masculine studies must produce a

masculine understanding. If such ought to be their result, they did no such thing in this case: her judgment remained as unsound, her imagination as vain, her plans and principles as much the sport of enthusiasm and fancy, as ever; and all the fruit she appeared to have reaped from her books had been only a fatal confidence in herself, which prevented that self-correction which might have arisen from a little more deference to the opinion of others. Let me not be mistaken: far be it from my intention to undervalue these severer studies, but I think I have observed many instances where, for want of an original foundation of sound good sense, they have been almost positively mischievous, from increasing the self-confidence I have here described.

The mother of this favorite youth of mine had, among other notions, taken up a violent prejudice against schools. She had read so many books upon education, and had reflected, as she thought, so much upon the subject—and she certainly, it must be confessed, had observed such very imperfect characters, both as regarded morals and instruction, turned out of our great seminaries and our universities—she really saw so much to be regretted in some portions of their methods, and thought she saw so much more than really existed, that she resolved upon adopting quite another plan in the education of this her only child and darling boy.

She resolved he should be educated at home, and under her own eye; and she devoted herself to the task with an energy and perseverance, which, had it been only directed to repairing the omissions of a more public education, instead of in substitution of it, would have produced all those results in perfection upon which she so fondly counted.

As it was, however, this young man, though so highly gifted in many respects, had, in the necessary indulgence and the over-refinement of an education in great measure private, found too much occasion for yielding to a sort of sensitive fastidiousness of taste—a constitutional indolence and dislike to take any prominent part—and a secret aversion to all the common, every-day business of life—which threatened to render talents of the first order, and a temper generous, disinterested, and benevolent in the extreme, of little service to mankind; in fact, a burden rather than a gift of inestimable value to the possessor.

And there he lies under that twisted hawthorn-tree, his eyelids half closed, listening to the hum of the insects, and inhaling the breeze as it passes softly over the crimson-headed clover, the yellow kingcups, and the feathery grass of the field before him—when he

would have been much better engaged in playing cricket, rowing a match, hunting with enthusiasm, or employed in any other energetic exercise which would have strengthened his frame, hardened his nerves, blunted his too acute sensibilities, and taught him to struggle among, and contend with, others of his age, for small objects, before engaging in the great contest for nobler ones.

Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such concert as they keep
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep.

So sang Milton; but Milton would never have been what he was if sterner materials had not been mingled in his composition.

I beg the noble father's pardon for forgetting to mention his influence in his son's education.

Perhaps you thought the mother was now a widow?

To all intents and purposes, as far as her son was concerned, she was. Her husband never interfered in that in the slightest degree. He was a man of clubs, and dinners, and race-horses. He had lived very little at home when in England; and had left every thing that concerned business to his very clever wife; while he lounged in St. James's-street, or betted at Newmarket, Ascot, or Epsom. His book was the serious object of his life, and his training-stables left him no time to interfere in the training of his son.

He gave his whole attention to his book; but he was a stupid, fog-headed man, even in that. His horses were always beaten, though the favorites; so his book brought him in course of time to such a pass, that, though he was not absolutely obliged to sell any portion of his large property, his wife thought it most prudent to shut up Sherington and go abroad. Once there, there they stayed, for she delighted in art and Italy, and she felt that the poetic temperament of her son—a quality to which she attached very great value—would be best developed at this distance from all the vulgarities and conventional common-places of a London life of fashion. So for several years she and her lord had been living altogether, either at Genoa, Florence, Rome, or Naples; and her son, though he visited England once a-year, and London every spring, had found himself perfectly at liberty to indulge his contemptuous dislike to rides in the park, and to elegant, flattering young ladies, dressed *à l'amazone*.

The bank on which he now rests commands a view of his father's domain.

There is a wide valley before him, which has been filled with a

fine mere of water, the result of one of those landscape-gardener arrangements by which lakes are formed of mere brooks; the water spreads wide from rising ground to rising ground, and is rendered very picturesque and beautiful by the undulations of the banks it laves, by the alders and willows that bend into it, and by the magnificent sedges and reeds which in some places adorn its sides, the smooth greensward in others coming down to the very brink. The water is shallow in several parts, and there cattle and horses are standing, enjoying the cool element; while swans are sailing on the deeper portions of the lake, and a heron may be seen standing with meditative gaze upon one of the little promontories. From this water the lawns rise in graceful undulations, crowned with magnificent woods, formed of the noblest trees, which grow here in the finest perfection—oak, ash, elm, beech, sweet chestnut, all equally gigantic and grand.

The house, a very palace, crowns the rising ground before him, which is covered with fine grass, and adorned with groups of deer. On the other side, as the banks recede, the prospect becomes wilder; you see there fern and copse-wood, foxgloves and fine purple thistles; now and then a little heath in the deer-park beyond. The valley then opens and affords a view of a fine champaign country, which is bordered by distant blue mountains.

On the side on which he lies the land is rich and productive; the inclosures of his father's farms are behind him and around him, and the field in which he rests is one of rich grass, softly waving, as I said, while the whispering wind passes over it.

He had been sitting there many hours, sometimes meditating vaguely, sometimes reading by snatches, but, upon the whole, enjoying his *dolce far niente* exceedingly; but at last it struck him, as his eye wandered over the beautiful but well-known landscape before him, that he was perfectly ignorant of what might be behind him—that his excursions had never extended so far as to cross the summit of the hill upon which he lay—for it was covered with inclosures, as I said; and there was no road, not even a bridle-road, exactly in that direction; so that he, being no hunter, had never happened to be led in that direction.

He was just then seized with a sudden desire to see what was to be found behind this line of unexplored hills; so he sprang up, called to a little King Charles spaniel which had been comfortably lying upon the warm bank by his side, and jumping over a gate in the hedge behind him, proceeded upon his voyage of discovery.

He soon gained the top of the hill, and expected to be rewarded by a view upon the other side as extensive and beautiful as that

which he had quitted ; but he was disappointed, as one very often is in this sort of scenery, when, after climbing a long, tedious ascent, one calculates upon being rewarded by beholding a fine expanse beyond.

The top of the hill proved to be a plain, not a ridge, and this plain so intersected with inclosures, tall hedges, and trees, that it was a perfect wilderness, and as unpleasing to an artist as any wilderness could be. There was not one object to excite attention or to make a picture ; green fields covered with green corn, wavy with mowing grass, or with cattle quietly grazing between those high hedges, in which might be seen ugly, tall, lopped elms, and now and then a willow or a maple. The land was too high for there to be any of that rich luxuriance of vegetation which makes almost every prospect interesting, and far too well farmed to admit of any of those features which would have constituted the romantic.

But the high hedges and trees effectually shut out any distant view ; and, therefore, our young friend, quite unable to guess how far this elevated plain extended, followed a narrow footpath which led to a stile upon the opposite side of the large field he had entered, flattering himself that when the tall hedge on the other side was passed, he should then find a view which would recompense him for his trouble.

This field was succeeded by another field, and by another and another, sometimes gradually descending, sometimes as gradually rising ; indeed, the ground was of that undulating description which effectually shuts out all distant prospects : upon the average, however, it tended downward.

Our young man kept walking on.

Regularly disappointed at every fresh ascent he attained, and regularly expecting that the next would reward him, he kept following the path through the fields, his little dog trotting before him.

From time to time he passed large farmhouses standing at a distance, which, with their many gable-ends, their long barns, and out-houses overhung with walnut and damson trees, just peered among the trees and hedges. Now and then he crossed a lane or little parish road ; but he still kept to his footpath.

It was his destiny, no doubt, that was leading him on, when he thought it was only his humor. He had a certainty that this footpath must lead to something, and he determined to follow it, lead where it would.

And in this persuasion he had walked, I verily believe, nearly six miles.

CHAPTER III.

Four acres was th' allotted space of ground,
Fenc'd with a green enclosure all around,
Tall thriving trees confess'd the fruitful mould,
The redd'ning apple ripens here to gold.

POPE.

THE landscape at last began to assume a more distinct character; the footpath carried him over the top of a somewhat steep little hill, and at his feet, amid a group of tall lime-trees, the hoar tower of a very ancient country church was to be seen rising. Wains were now heard rolling at no great distance,—the voices of children at play reached him next: it was evident he was approaching a village.

The footpath led him once more over a stile, and then terminated in a pretty wide road. A rather considerable pond of water, out of which some huge cart-horses, relieved from plough, were splashing; the screams of geese, flapping their wings when thus disturbed, and flying over the wide greensward that bordered the road; an open gate leading into a large fold-ground; and an extensive orchard of apple, pear, and cherry-trees, showed that he was coming upon a large farm, and he had proceeded only a few paces further when he saw the house before him.

It was one of those old-fashioned farm-houses, which had evidently once been the dwelling of some considerable family, the manor-house belonging to some large domain. The building was of timber, and the huge beams painted red, with the intervals white; and the long roof was terminated at each end by immense gables, very richly ornamented with carved wood, and in which were some fine old oriel windows; and the peaks and points of the rest of the building might be seen towering above the roof, interspersed with quaintly ornamented and twisted chimneys. There was a very handsome old porch adorning the center of this front, and before it lay an old-fashioned garden, which reached to the road, from which it was separated by a thick and closely-cut yew hedge, ornamented at the corners and along the sides with pinnacles and other devices of topiary work. A few low walls, covered with trained fruit-trees, divided this garden at regular intervals, and a straight gravel-walk ran up the middle to the door, cutting these walls at right angles,

and with a flower-border on each side, filled with common but gaudy flowers, sweet peas, lupines, lychnises, roses, and so on.

The garden was very gaudy, with polyanthuses, auriculas, narcissuses, tulips, and all sorts of gay spring flowers, and seemed to extend to the other side of the house, where the trees of a second orchard were discernible.

There was a huge mastiff asleep before the porch.

The fold-yard might be seen from the road, and all sorts of rural noises were to be heard proceeding from it,—poultry cackling, doves cooing, pigs grunting, and cattle softly lowing; little calves were running about, and a great many men and boys busily occupied here and there: all the activity and stir of a very large farm going on.

Our young friend had not much taste for agriculture—he was not a man of action, you observe—and he cast rather a disgustful eye upon that wealth which, in the shape of monstrous heaps of manure, was gathered here together, and which was being carted away at this very time; neither did he remark the fine, short-horn yearlings which were wandering about the fold, still less a magnificent breed of fine pigs: but he liked the aspect of the old mansion very much, the silence and repose of the garden, with the old mastiff asleep, and not a soul to be seen; and he was, moreover, so exceedingly thirsty after his hot walk that he resolved to step up and beg a glass of milk.

So he opened the gate which led into the garden, and walked up the formal pathway, very much pleased with the quaint, antique simplicity of the old place, and not in the least troubling himself about the huge mastiff which lay there dozing before the door. But the old mastiff was accustomed to sleep with one eye open, and no sooner was he aware of the approach of the stranger than he started up, shook the chain which fastened him to the side of the porch, and began to utter a most loud and threatening bark.

The chain was a strong one, as our friend soon saw; so he was continuing to approach the steps, in spite of the warlike demonstrations and loud, hoarse barking of the faithful guardian, when he was aware of a young woman issuing in much haste out of the house, who, without noticing him, hastily ran down the steps, laid hold of the fierce animal, and, between coaxing and scolding, endeavored to make him be quiet.

“Never mind, young woman,” said our friend; “pray don’t make yourself uneasy. I see the chain is strong, and though the dog is one of the finest and fiercest I ever saw, I am not in the least afraid of him.”

“Oh, sir,” replied she, “it’s not for that. It’s lest the noise

should disturb the sick lady. Nero makes such a tremendous barking when any body comes up to the house, that we chained L. m in the garden here, for one reason—and for another, to keep guard lest any body should come up the garden-way. I suppose you are a stranger, sir? Be quiet, Nero! won't you? And, pray," looking at him rather suspiciously, "what may your business be?"

The young man was not dressed in a manner to command much respect or consideration from those who look to mere outsides of things. He had on a light summer morning coat, very much the worse for wear, and an old white hat.

Some people would have detected the gentleman under this disguise, or any disguise, without a moment's hesitation; but the young woman did not seem quite capable of that. She looked as if she did not very well know what to make of him. She considered him a little while, and then said,—

"Will you please, sir, to make me acquainted with your name and business?"

"I have no particular business here, I must own," said the young gentleman, now fixing upon her such a very pleasant pair of eyes that her hesitation and distrust began to give way. "I have lost my way wandering among the fields, and really have not the slightest conception where I am, or what is the name of the village to which that pretty old church belongs. It is excessively hot, I am dreadfully thirsty, and I ventured to come up the garden to ask for a glass of milk, never thinking your Nero would make such a to-do about it. I am sorry I have committed a trespass in coming into the garden, but I will take myself away directly if you wish it."

"Down, Nero!" Nero, obedient to his mistress, upon this lay down, with his head to the ground, but kept his red large eye fixed upon the stranger, and uttered from time to time a low threatening growl. "Be quiet! won't you, sir?" Then, again turning to the young man, "Oh, sir, if it had been at any other time—to be sure the garden way used to be open to all comers and goers who came to the house for misses—but now, sir, it's on account of a poor lady, that we all think is dying, that we wish to keep the place as quiet as we can."

"One of the family?"

"No; a lodger, sir."

"A lodger!" looking round somewhat surprised.

"Yes, sir. This is a very large house—it once belonged, as I've been told, to the ancient family of Willoughby, who have the fine place near Bindon—Bindon Priory, sir."

The young man nodded; he knew the place and family well enough.

"And this was once the manor-house, sir, they say; but — Down, Nero! Pray walk in, sir, for a moment, for I see the dog won't be quiet, and I'll take you out through the back way, that we mayn't have to pass him again."

"But I hope I shall not disturb the sick lady?"

"Oh no, sir, no fear of that; she's now lying on her couch in the orchard. So you can pass through. I'm only afraid of the noise the dog makes disturbing her. Pray step in, and I'll fetch you a glass of milk in a minute; and bring your pretty little dog in with you. He won't bark, will he, sir?"

"I'll take care of that," said our friend, taking up his little companion in his arms.

He ascended the steps, and entered by the low, richly ornamented porch, over which, carved in stone, the coat of arms of the ancient family of the Willoughbys was yet visible. He came first into a long, low, and very narrow passage, which ended in a spacious room, or rather antechamber, with casement windows, now all standing wide open, and which looked upon the verdant grass and large trees of the orchard, the branches of which cast a most agreeably cool and green shade into the room. This apartment, as is the case in many old houses, was the only means of communication between the entrance passage and a few small rooms opening out of it, and the rest of the house; so that the young woman was obliged to usher her guest into it, though it was plain that it was in use now as a sitting-room.

It was a large, low room, lighted by three tall and wide casement windows, all of which were now open; and in front of which, and at a little distance, grew two majestic walnut-trees, which, their huge lateral branches spreading far around, and covered with heavy masses of foliage of the brightest green, cast their deep shadows upon the grass. The trunks of these trees rose so loftily before the giant branches came off, that the whole formed a sort of elevated canopy, under which the rest of the garden might be seen, and glimpses of distant groves and fields were displayed. The beauty of this picture being greatly enhanced by the presence of a huge catalpa—a perfect pyramid of flowers, of marble whiteness, which, rising eight or ten feet from the ground, was now just bursting into bloom, and stood there, like a fair pinnacle of Parian stone, amid the dark green of forest-trees of all descriptions which surrounded it.

"Stay here, sir," said the young woman, "if you please, and I'll fetch you the milk. There's no danger of disturbing the poor lady"

(observing that he hesitated); "I see they're all quiet, as I said, in the garden. And, hark! Miss Angela is reading aloud."

The murmur of a low voice, as if reading, was now heard; but he could not discern the person to whom it belonged.

The young woman now disappeared to fetch the milk, leaving our friend standing alone in the room.

Nothing could be more simple than was the furniture of the apartment. There was a lofty chimneypiece on one side, rising almost to the ceiling; it was of carved oak, almost black with age, its sombre hue being unrelieved by any ornament of any description. The grate, however, below, was filled with greens and branches of hawthorn in flower. A Scotch carpet, of the cheapest kind and very small dimensions, was in the middle of the floor, covering, it might be, about one-third of the room; the uncovered part of the boards being of oak, black as that of the mantelpiece; and a wainscot, of the same gloomy material, of an height to reach to the elbow, ran round the apartment; above which was an old, dingy-looking paper. The room looked desolate, dreary, unfinished, and uncomfortable. A round oak table in the middle; a few old-fashioned, very heavy, and very ugly-looking mahogany chairs, with horsehair seats; a little sort of sideboard with drawers; a walnut-tree chest and *secrétoire*; an old, worm-eaten screen, covered with old prints, completed the furniture of the apartment: to which must be added, a large, and somewhat comfortable-looking sofa, provided with abundance of cushions, which, as well as the sofa, were all covered with patchwork, rather elegant than otherwise in its effect, from the form of the pattern, and the extreme nicety and exactness with which it was stitched and finished.

There was a tall, antique, Rhenish wine-glass upon the table, with two or three sprigs of honeysuckle in it; a large, well-furnished workbox open beside it; and upon the little sideboard, instead of plate, a row of books in old bindings.

I forgot to say that a small square piano-forte stood under one of the windows; and that, over the sideboard, hung a well-executed portrait of a remarkably handsome young man in uniform.

Our young gentleman—he could not exactly tell himself why—took a more than common interest in examining all these things in detail; and while he was employed in noting these little evidences of self-denial and poverty, the low murmur of the reader's voice kept sounding in his ears, seeming to his fancy to have something most particularly sweet and attractive in the tones of it.

The maid servant now returned, carrying a small waiter, and upon

it a glass of the richest and most delicious milk ; and being naturally of a communicative, good-natured disposition, and in the present instance, moreover, very much pleased with the gentle manners and very fine eyes of the young stranger ; and, above all, being one who loved in her heart to have a portion in any romantic history, and, moreover, most warmly interested in those he was thinking of—she seeing him looking with some attention at the portrait, began,—

“ Yes, sir, very handsome, most certainly, he must have been once ; but he was a very different sort of a person to look upon when he came here, poor, poor gentleman ! such a thin, wasted skeleton, and with such a cough ! ”

A hollow cough, the fatal, not-to-be-mistaken signal of pulmonary consumption, at this moment sounded from the garden.

The young man started, and prepared to leave the room immediately, saying,—“ Is that his cough ? I may disturb them ? ”

“ Alas, poor gentleman ! you’ll never disturb him,” said the maid, in a compassionate voice ; “ he’s been lying in the churchyard, it’s ten months or more ago ; but he’s left his cough as a legacy, we are all much afraid, to his poor young widow : the only legacy that he’d got to leave her, some say,” she added, in a low voice.

He stopped at this, and with his hand still upon the lock of the door, turned, and said,—

“ And the one you call Miss Angela, who is she ? ”

“ His daughter, sir ; his eldest daughter. Don’t be afraid, sir,” as he was about to open the door, and quit the room, “ they’re hidden by that strawberry-tree there ; they can’t possibly see into the room, and they never leave the garden till much later in the evening—the sick lady loves so to be in the air. Miss Angela will call me to help shift her couch before she moves, so you’ll have plenty time, sir, to get away. If you would like to stay a bit longer, pray do. I’d ask you into the other part of the house, but misses stepped out just now, and has taken the key of the parlor door with her, because the whitewashers are busy about the place ; and the kitchen is all in a mess, and not fit to take any gentleman into. So pray sit down and rest, if you please, for a quarter of an hour : you won’t disturb any one, indeed.”

“ Thank you,” said he, irresistibly impelled to inquire more ; and sitting down in a chair by the door, far removed from the garden,—“ That gentleman was an officer, I see ; pray can you tell me of what regiment ? ”

“ I can’t justly say, sir : he belonged to the foot-regiment, I

believe; and he was only a captain, sir, and on half-pay, they say. I don't understand what that is; half his wages, perhaps, because he was so sick. But, sir, I can't help thinking it's rather a pity her gracious majesty don't do more for them officers in her regiments as be gentlemen, and sinking with sickness, and very poor. It's a hard struggle, sir, when a gentleman, a real gentleman—and that he was—is very poor."

The young man shook his head with an air of sympathy, which encouraged his companion, in a low voice, to proceed,—the murmur of the reading voice still continuing.

"They've been here, sir, about eighteen months; for this is a quiet place, and misses lets her lodgings very cheap: for in this big old house there are more rooms than she can well away with, and it's not very easy to get any one to come to such a dull, out-of-the-way part of the world. It's not very smartly furnished neither, sir, you see; but they don't seem much to mind that, so they can but be quiet, and have a garden to turn out into; and that, to be sure, they have, and a *very* pretty one, too. That sofa there, misses lets them have it, though it's not belonging to the room, because the poor gentleman was so weak he could not sit up, and no easy chair for him, poor soul! It was a sad tattered thing, too; but Miss Angela contrived to mend the holes, and stuff it with feathers and horsehair, and what she could get; and she covered it with that pretty patchwork cover, made with her own white hands. It's now as soft and comfortable as can be, sir; only try it——"

"Was she the captain's only daughter?"

"Of the first family, sir; but the captain was married twice, and there are three little children of the second marriage, and a step-mother, too. Some think that was hard upon Miss Angela."

"Does she think so herself?"

"No, not the least bit in the world; she and her stepmother love each other more like sisters than any thing else; and Miss Angela's just like an own mother to the little ones since the poor lady has been taken so sick like."

"She fall ill, too? This is very sad!"

"Sad enough, sir! for, as I have heard the doctor say, it's all come of nursing the captain day and night, poor lady, as she did, and taking on so sorely after his death, which has brought her to the brink of the grave; and that, I believe, is what Miss Angela thinks too, that it's all along of the love the poor widow that now is bore her father that she's brought to this sad pass; and so she seems to think nothing that she can do too much for her.—She's a

very, very sweet young lady, that Miss Angela is. Wouldn't you like to have just one peep at her, sir?"

"Very much, indeed; only I would not, for the universe, seem intrusive; and I do not like to stay here any longer upon that account." Again rising, and going to the door.

"No, sir, neither shall you. Please step this way," opening the door for him herself. "You shall see her without there being the least danger in the world of her seeing you."

CHAPTER IV.

So, glorious mirror of celestial grace,
And sovereign monument of mortal vows,
How shall frail pen describe her heavenly face,
For fear, through want of skill, her beauty to disgrace?

SPENSER.

THE door opened into another low narrow passage, which seemed to communicate with the other part of the house; about the middle of it there was a recess, which ran into what formed a considerable projection upon the outside. It was terminated by a narrow slip of a window of small-paned glass, all mantled over, and almost hidden from observation, by honeysuckles, sweet brier, and virgin's bower, which hung round it. A little casement, nearly at the top, and which was no bigger than an ordinary sized window-pane, stood open, and through the branches which hung over the lower part a view of the orchard might be obtained, without it being possible for any from without to see a person standing at it.

There the good-natured girl placed her new acquaintance, whispering, as she peeped out of the window first,—

"There they are, you can see them quite well; that's the sick lady lying upon the couch there, and that's Miss Angela sitting by her, with her side-face turned this way; but you need not be afraid, she can't possibly see you; and besides, she's so busy reading."

The little group was placed upon the grass under the shade of one of the huge walnut-trees, which flung its magnificent branches far above their heads; the masses of green cutting sharp against the clear blue sky, and intercepting the bright beams of the sun, which yet softly penetrated in some degree, and the beautiful transparent

green of the leaves mitigated with a peculiar mellowness the deep shadows which fell upon the rich grass beneath.

Upon a small, narrow, and inconvenient-looking little couch, but so carefully propped and supported by a chair and numerous pillows as evidently to repose in an attitude of considerable ease and comfort, lay the sick lady, and upon a small stool by her side the young reader was sitting.

The pale, attenuated, but yet most delicately beautiful face of the invalid, was shaded by the curls and tresses of her still bright and beautiful hair, which had escaped from the small white cap which she wore. She was dressed in a loose white dressing-gown, delicately clean, and over her was thrown a white cashmere shawl. A hectic flush upon her cheek gave additional loveliness to her most lovely face, her eyes were closed, and long, curling, dark eyelashes, rested upon her cheek.

Her breathing was evidently oppressed and difficult, and now and then her short hollow cough was heard. Then the young lady beside her would interrupt her reading, would turn her face toward her, move the shawl, gently touch the pale, thin, delicate hand which lay upon it, gaze upon the countenance before her with a look of angelic compassion and interest, sigh softly, and again, in tones still lower and, if possible, still sweeter, would resume her reading.

She was a young girl of about nineteen years of age, dressed in a plain cotton gown, but which, fitting close, displayed the extraordinary beauty of her slender and graceful figure. Her small head, her long delicate throat, the pure outline of her countenance thus turned in profile to the gazer, the sweetness of the mouth, the dovelike innocence of the expression, as she sat there, her eyes bent downward upon her book, the angelic kindness of her look when she turned to the sufferer—an air which it is vain to attempt in words to describe, and which the finest pencil would be powerless to represent—an air of purity, simplicity, softness, and a most singular expression of calmness and strength mingled together,—all these charms united rendered this young creature, as there unconsciously she sat, one of the most lovely and interesting beings in the eyes of the young gentleman that he had ever in his life beheld, or could think it possible to imagine.

She was far from regularly handsome—a nice critic might have found fault with every feature—but he who stood looking at her there, fixed as if in a dream of enchantment, was never formed by nature to pick out minute faults.

Fastidious he might be, but he was not critical. Few things

pleased him, indeed, but once pleased he overlooked all minor blemishes.

Gently waved the pendent branches of the magnificent walnut-tree, and the soft, cool air came softly playing over the face of the sufferer; and as the soft wind blew over her she seemed to breathe with somewhat less difficulty, and at length to sink into a comfortable slumber.

Then her young friend laid down the book she held, rose from her seat, laid a cambric handkerchief softly over the head of the sleeper, and bending over, her eyes fixed upon her face, kept looking at her with an expression of sadness, pity, tenderness, and anxiety, mingled, which contrasted in the most affecting manner with her youthful figure and countenance.

In moving she had turned her full face toward him, so that as he stood at the little window he saw it perfectly. Never had he beheld any thing so charming—he could not take his eyes away—he forgot where he was—he forgot every other consideration—he could only stand there beholding that countenance which had, at the first glance, exercised that unaccountable attraction, excited one of those sudden sympathies which often prove as indelible as they are unexpected.

Enthusiastic as he was by temperament, strange to say, he had never felt the force of such an influence till then; imaginative as he was, he had never been in love, nor even fancied himself in love before.

I do not know how long he stood there, or how long the young lady, having returned to her seat, had sat there, her hands crossed in a desponding attitude, watching the sick lady with that air of compassion, sorrow, and anxiety.

He was aroused at last from the deep reverie into which he had fallen by the maid coming up to him again, and asking him whether he would please to go on now, as it was milking time, and she must be at her duty in the dairy.

He turned round, as one awakened suddenly from a profound sleep, and seemed for the moment in so much confusion of thought that he did not know exactly where he was; but he left the window immediately and followed her, obedient to her request, yet being scarcely aware of what he was about, while she led the way through various other narrow passages, till they entered the busy house-place of the farm, and through that went out into the fold-yard.

There all the cheerful evening bustle of a very large farm was going on, and contrasted strangely with the silent scene of sorrow which he had left behind him.

The fold-yard was surrounded with the usual buildings upon an extensive scale. A very large and lofty barn with giant doors, where a threshing-machine was still at work; long lines of cattle-sheds filled with magnificent oxen; a large cow-house, stables, piggeries, &c. The buildings, however, with some few exceptions, being all very ancient, and consequently, very picturesque in their appearance. In fact the kitchens, cellars, and various apartments once filled by the dependents and retainers of the noble family of Willoughby, who formerly occupied this great manor-house, were now appropriated to these humbler purposes; and where stores of wines and provisions had been provided to furnish forth the splendid hospitality of the old days, where knights had caroused round the board, and squires and pages laughed and gamboled—now no sound was to be heard but the champing of the animals ranged at their food. The gentle low of the cows as they entered and recognized their young ones; the occasional stamps of the hoofs and the ringing of the halter-chains of horses now stabled in what had once been a low hall; the voices of the carter-boys as they dressed their steeds; or the cry at intervals addressed by the milkers to the mute and quiet animals they attended, had succeeded. The poultry-girl was calling together her feathered family; fowls of every description came trooping round her—noble cocks, mottled hens, ducks, turkeys, guinea-fowls. The whole was a scene of rural wealth and abundance most cheerful and animating.

The master of this place was to be seen walking about in his yard, directing his different servants. Some were just coming in with their wearied teams, others collecting the corn from the threshing-machine, which kept up its regular monotonous beat, others busy sweeping the footways in front of the outhouses, others carrying forage to the animals. Nothing could be more cheerfully alive than it all was.

It was a perfect picture of agricultural life; but yet there was wanting a certain neatness, order, and economy, which prevails in really well-ordered farms of the present day, managed by men themselves improved by modern culture. Every thing was abundant, it is true, and it was plain that things were profitably managed upon the whole; but there was none of that exactness or arrangement which marks system and thought. However, to one a poet by nature, or a landscape-painter by nature, both of which, perhaps, our young man might be esteemed, the picture was not the less agreeable for its character of rich disorder, which might have afforded the very subject-matter for one of Morland or Gainsborough's incom-

parable sketches; but if he had found it necessary to address the master of the scene, he might not have been altogether so well pleased with him.

One or two horses, of a very different description from wagon-horses, and some capital guns in the farmer's own parlor, might have told of pursuits not exactly in accordance with a strict attention to agriculture, on the part of some of the family at least; and the decided and somewhat forbidding countenance which belonged to the mistress of the mansion, was in very disagreeable contrast with that expression of spirit, activity, and benignity united, which usually may be seen to characterize a good genuine English farmer's wife.

Mrs. Whitwell, for that was her name, surrounded by her maidens, was at this moment, however, in the full tide of business, and was receiving the milk into a very large, handsome dairy, which was certainly kept with a scrupulous attention to neatness, whatever other places might be. The flowing pails were rapidly coming in from the cowsheds, and the long lines of milkpans were receiving their rich treasures; this was not, therefore, exactly the most auspicious time for any one to address her, and so our young man found reason to perceive.

The dairy was separated from the fold-yard by a little narrow garden, paved round and filled with sweet herbs and flowers—marigold and rosemary, sage and marjoram, rue and thyme; and the latticed door was now open, the pails of milk being carried in and retained. There she stood, the busy mistress of the place, close by a weighing-machine which was fixed at the door, and was occupied in weighing the milk as it was brought in, and was delivered to her busy handmaidens, among whom might be seen, the most active of the set, the very young woman our friend had first made acquaintance with upon his entrance into the garden, and who was, consequently, at present no longer to be spoken with.

To go away without learning something more of those who had interested him so much, was not to be thought of. The mistress of the house was evidently the right person to apply to; and our friend, whose rank and importance in the world had accustomed him to expect and to meet with respectful attention from whomsoever he had honored by addressing, hesitated not to interrupt even these absorbing avocations: so he crossed the little garden, and taking off his hat, approached the stout, rosy-faced woman he saw before him, and saluting her, made some observation upon the beauty of the evening.

She had her eyes fixed upon the milk she was weighing, but

lifted her face hastily up at this address, and eyeing the speaker with some surprise and no great cordiality, said, "Yes," and continued her business.

"You seem to have a very fine dairy here," he went on, not knowing exactly what to say next.

"Pretty fair. Were you wanting to speak to Mr. Whitwell, young man? he's there in the fold-yard, I reckon. We're busy here."

"No, I don't want to speak to Mr. Whitwell, thank you. I wanted to ask a few questions from yourself."

"You might have chosen your hour better, methinks, than just at milking time. Questions! what about? They'll keep, maybe, till I've done. Please to stand out of Jem's way, will you," as a big, rough lad came up, carrying an enormous milk-pail upon his head. "Step into the fold-yard, will you, and you may ask your questions by and by, when a body has time to listen."

He tried to persist, but Mrs. Whitwell did not even condescend to look at, far less answer him again; so in his own defense he was forced to retreat into the fold-yard, where, sitting down upon a bench against the wall he waited patiently, amusing himself by witnessing the various operations that were going on. At length the dairy business being finished and the door locked, Mrs. Whitwell stepped across the little garden, and after shutting and carefully locking the gate, condescended to attend to the young man; and, coming up and addressing him, bade him follow her. She then led him through the house-place, and into her own parlor, when turning round, without inviting him to sit down, or showing him any civility, she inquired, roughly enough, what his business with her might chance to be.

The parlor was low, like the rest of the rooms, and the heavy beams which crossed the ceiling gave it a very gloomy look, though the wainscot was painted white, and the walls green, and several gaudy, vulgar prints hung round them. An oval mahogany table in the middle of the room, another large handsome mahogany table against the side, large handsome chairs ranged symmetrically to the wainscot; a corner cupboard open, with a very handsome display of silver spoons, flagons, and old china; some very curious old glass and china on the chimneypiece; a huge nosegay of hawthorn and Portugal laurel in the fireplace, composed the furniture of the apartment. Every thing was, however, as bright and as clean, and as good, and as handsome, as such things could possibly be.

At the window a piping bullfinch was singing away in a very

handsome cage; and the casement was standing wide open, but, to the young man's disappointment, it looked quite away into the fields, and commanded a view neither of garden nor orchard.

"You have a sick lady lodging in the house, I believe?" he began, hesitating, stammering, and coloring a little; for the manner and demeanor of Mrs. Whitwell was so bluff and determined that it quite put him out of countenance.

"Perhaps we have," was the reply; "what business may that be of yours?"

"It is no particular business of mine; but I have just seen them, and their appearance, and the circumstances in which they seem to be, have interested me very much, and—and—"

"Just seen them! How came you just to have seen them, without knowing any thing about them? Oh! it's you, maybe, that Polly said she saw coming up by the garden-gate, and that Kitty was fool enough to bring in by that door—afraid of the dog making a noise, as she says. Kitty's always so busy meddling and making—if I've told her once, I've told her five hundred times, I would *not* have any one let in by that way. That girl's the plague of my life with her nonsense."

"She was afraid the dog might bark and disturb the sick lady."

"Stuff and nonsense! as if the bark of a dog half a mile off could disturb any body! And pray, what's the use of the dog but to bark, and keep that side of the house from beggars and vagabonds? for it's lone enough, to be sure, and so far from all the servants, that it's not quite safe, in my opinion, when all the lads are in the fields—for there's many a rough traveler and wandering beggar and gipsy comes up the road—so I put the dog there, for he's quite a terror to all that sort of cattle. But what brought you up there, I wonder, young gentleman?"

Mrs. Whitwell had by this time found opportunity to examine the person before her well, and to feel satisfied that, whatever else he might be, he certainly was, in manners and appearance, a gentleman; and, in spite of the simplicity of his dress, no idle vagabond, as she had at first felt inclined to think him, and her manner increased in civility accordingly.

"I had lost my way in the fields," said he, in reply; "and I came up that way to the house, only intending to beg the favor of a glass of milk; and Kitty, I believe it was, was so good as to let me in immediately; and I chanced to see the sick lady and the other young lady in the orchard as I passed by."

"Well and good; but I'll trounce Miss Kitty, see if I don't; and

if this is all you have to say, young gentleman, I think I may as well wish you a good evening. But before you go, if you'd like a glass of milk, or a glass of wine and a slice of bread-and-butter, as you seem tired enough, pray sit down, and you shall have it. You've lost your way, you say. Did you come up through the village?"

"No I came across the hills and over the fields at the back of the house there, and so by the stile into the lane just above."

"I don't wonder you lost your way, then. It's a perfect wilderness of fields and high hedges up there. But what could bring you this way at all? and, if it isn't impertinent, what may be your name and calling?"

"My name is Carteret," said the young man, after a moment taken for consideration; "and my employment that of a landscape-painter."

"Well, young man," said Mrs. Whitwell, looking something disappointed at this announcement, "every one's best judge of their own business; but I believe them idle vagabond callings to be the very worst any young man can follow. And once we had a landscape painter down here, last midsummer was twelve months, come to draw our old church, as he said; and he must needs draw this farmhouse too, as if there was any thing worth drawing in the tumble-down rickety old ruin: but he was a poor hand at it; nevertheless he cockered up Mr. Whitwell, and contrived to creep up his sleeve, and at last he ended by borrowing five pounds from him; and after that, good morning to my young gentleman: from that time to this, we have never set eyes on him. But he was very much in want, I fancy; and, indeed, it's our luck, I think, to be bothered with the very-much-in-want. Vagabonds come to us as wasps do to honey. Some have the luck of it—there's these lodgers of ours," added she, grumbling to herself; "every time I go in to ask for rent I've a feel that it will be the last time they'll be able to pay it: but, to be sure, the poor lady has her widow's pension."

"They are very poor, then, you suppose?"

This conversation had been going on while Mrs. Whitwell—who was, after all, no inhospitable person, and who, on further acquaintance, had taken rather a fancy to the appearance of the young man—was busy going to and fro to her corner cupboard, taking out first a decanter half full of port wine, then a piece of home-made cake, with plate, knife, wineglass, &c.; and setting it upon the table, desired Mr. Carteret to sit down and help himself to what he liked."

To give himself a countenance, as the French would say, he

accepted of her hospitality ; and, sitting down, poured himself out a glass of wine. " Poor enough !—bless me ! that's what I fear they are, to be sure. But what's a man to expect, after all, who, not content with one wife and child, must take it into his head to marry another, and have three little children, when, bless you, he'd nothing in the born world, as I verily believe, but his pay, and that half-pay, to buy them a bit of bread with—and what's that? Half-pay! people are so mad in these days. But as they brew, so they must bake. I don't see what business it is of mine or any body's else, so long as their rent's paid."

" I can't agree with you there," said he who called himself Mr. Carteret. " It seems to me to be very much every body's business."

" Every body's business to take care of themselves, perhaps, you mean ; and look out and not to let lodgings without good security : but some way mine had stood empty such a long time—it's such an out-of-the-way place, this—that I thought I never should let them at all ; and he looked quite the gentleman, to be sure ; and, at all events, thinks I, they will keep the rooms aired ; so I let them come in ; and the worst of it is, though I'd be glad enough to get them out again, somehow I can't quite make the face to do it ; for the lady's very ill, that's certain—and I don't know well what they would do if I turned them out. That's the worst of having to do with people who have neither money nor friends."

To this, Carteret made no reply.

Mrs. Whitwell seemed only to have been talking on while he finished his little meal, for she did not, it would appear, in spite of her liking to his face, choose to leave her open corner-cupboard and her unknown guest alone together ; and now that he had done, she looked restless, as if it was time he should be taking himself away ; so, there seeming to be no help for it, he got up, bade her a good evening, and slowly walked out through the fold-yard.

CHAPTER V.

That turret's frame most admirable was,
Like highest heaven compassed around,
And lifted high above this earthly mass,
Which it surview'd, as hills doen lower ground.

SPENSER.

"*Those who have neither money nor friends!*" It rang in his ears, while before his eyes, vivid as if actually present, was the picture of the beautiful waxen face and hands of the dying invalid, and of the young girl, with a countenance like an angel of pity, hanging over her. Scarcely could he, in imagination, refrain from clothing this last figure in long flowing garments of dazzling white, and large swan-like wings. He could picture to himself no face of a seraphic messenger more holy and pure, more full of gentle tenderness, of heartfelt pity, all blended with a calm force and strength, in so young a creature, quite remarkable.

It was lucky that there was a well-marked footpath through this wilderness of fields, which his little dog followed instinctively, he as instinctively following his dog, or he might have spent the night wandering among the hedges; as it was, however, he safely reached the height where he had lain musing in the morning, descended it, crossed the stone bridge which spanned that clear wide brook which fed the mere; and through noble avenues and verdant shrubberies, through handsome lodges, with iron gates between pillars supporting the arms of his family, and amid all the appendages of rank and grandeur, reached at last his home: he cared not by which way, and the little dog led him straight up to the grand entrance. Very grand it was—a splendid Grecian portico, elevated upon magnificent Doric pillars, standing upon a base of the finest stone; the wings of this palace stretching out upon each side, the rich woods, and lawns, and deer-park, surrounding the whole.

The place, however, splendid as it was, had a melancholy and deserted air, and the stone base upon which the pillars were supported had begun to be discolored and tinted green. It was seldom that any one went in now by the front door, but he was so absorbed by his own thoughts, that he, in an absent manner, went up to it and rang the bell.

The sound echoed loudly through the deserted mansion, and a footman, evidently much surprised, answered the summons. He opened one of the lines of fine carved oak, and ushered his young master into the entrance-hall.

The hall rose magnificent and lofty to the roof; it had been built in the richest taste of James the First's time; a highly ornamented dome, galleries running round, with arches and gilded balustrades, a floor of colored marbles, pictures in magnificent frames, busts and statues, horns of animals, coats of armor; scarlet and blue, and crimson and white, and gold; all mingled harmoniously, and all very, very grand.

"They have neither money nor friends!"

The footman opened a door at the other end of the hall, his footsteps echoing among the vaults and arches as he passed toward it. It opened upon an antechamber lined with carved maple-wood, and paneled with portraits, or with lovely rural pictures, of cupids and nymphs, amid garlands of leaves and flowers—all gay and delightful. This antechamber led to Carteret's own sitting-room, which was fitted up with dark-green damask and gold, and lined on one side with books, being upon the others covered all over with choice pictures.

Over the chimneypiece was a glorious "Holy Family," by Raphael, a very precious picture. The divine beauty of the virgin mother, set off by the deep blue and crimson of her garments; and the child, whose face seemed to beam with a sacred light, which in itself illuminated the picture, relieved by the grave and sombre coloring of the hoary foster-father; and of the brown child with his little goat-skin coat, represented kneeling with clasped hands, in all the energy of inspired adoration, before his Saviour.

Small pictures, all treasures in their way, covered the walls; among the most remarkable of which was a "Summer Evening," by Claude, where the yellow rays stream upon the sweetest of Italian landscapes, and upon two huge trees which overspread the center (he thought they looked very like walnut-trees); while the flocks and herds were led there to water. And another of a heavenly Seraph, by some unknown painter—a small picture, but of exquisite beauty.

The original of that picture it was which he thought he had seen that day in the garden. Beyond this sitting-room, and opening out of it, there was a bedchamber, furnished by his fond mother with all the elaborate luxury of these our too luxurious times, but which I need not here detail.

The windows of all these rooms looked upon a beautiful French garden, framed, as it were, by a thick shrubbery, which shut it out from every eye; it was cut into all sorts of fantastical shapes and patterns, and a perfect mosaic work, at this moment, of the gayest flowers; in the center played a small fountain, which, springing from the nostrils of two marble dolphins, fell with a pleasant splash into a marble basin—the basin being enchased, as it were, in green mossy turf, and in it abundance of gold and silver fish were gliding about.

A beautiful pair of Balearic cranes, two or three of those loveliest tiny American pigeons which may be seen in the Zoological Gardens, and a sweet little sea-gull, with its soft gray feathers, its downy breast, clear large eye, and scarlet legs and bill, were the only denizens of their tiny paradise.

A rich marquetry table stood in the middle of the sitting-room. He went up to it; it was, as usual after post-time, covered over with letters, cards, and packets of various sorts and sizes, which had been brought in during his absence. He opened them, one after another, with an air of impatience and indifference, and tossed them carelessly away as he scanned them over. They were from his young men friends, and mostly full of invitations from various quarters, and to various scenes of gayety or splendor—to races or tournaments, country-house parties, balls, and festivities.

"They have neither money nor friends!" kept ringing in his ears.

He looked round, but his fancy reverted to the old sofa covered with patchwork, and contrasted it with his luxurious couch, loaded with cushions of rich damask; he stepped to the window, but the rich mosaic of the flowers disappeared, the splashing fountain, and the graceful birds that wandered amid the beautiful plants. He saw only the solemn shade of the large walnut-trees hanging over the greensward, and the lowly couch, and the pillows and the chairs, and she who had risen from her seat, and who, bending so kindly over the sufferer, her face turned toward him, had regarded her with that eye of compassion, so feelingly, yet with such a divine serenity.

"And they have neither money nor friends!"

He looked round, and his heart, froze, as it were, together.

Serrement de cœur! Why is there no English term for that which so many in this country are destined to feel? it is the only expression which can render the intensely painful sensation he at that moment experienced.

* * * * *

"Shall it be this way? Let me put it this way—try it, dear

Margaret: you will breathe better.—No!—will not that do?—Let me put my arm under it then—lay your head upon my shoulder—is that better? Dear Margaret! dear mother! dear friend! the Father of Mercies be your support.”

“He is—he does,” whispered the sufferer, in a faint voice. “His comforts are ineffable. Nay, dearest Angela,” as one or two large round drops fell, like the dewdrop rolling over a blush-rose leaf, upon a cheek, which sickness, it is true, had not yet touched, but which care and sorrow, alas! little suited to her years, had already slightly invaded,—“Nay, dearest Angela, do not weep for me. Those whispers from within, which have consoled many a silent sufferer upon her neglected couch, visit me, and with them I have in His mercy the inexpressible comfort of a friend, a child, a saint, and angel, all in one. Ah, my Angela, do not weep for me!”

Short coughs, pantings for breath, the painful symptoms of consumption in its last stages, interrupted this speech.

“All I fear, my dearest girl, is, that your tender care of me may injure yourself. Why can I not—why do I not—forbid you to come near me?”

“Because you know, dear Margaret, that it would be quite in vain to contest *that* point. I feel as certain as one's own internal feelings can make one, that I am not in the slightest danger of suffering by nursing you; and if I did not I should still do it,—so say not one word upon that old dispute, Margaret, it only tires you and worries me. Dearest friend,” kissing her hand so tenderly, for she dared not stoop down to kiss her face,—that Margaret positively forbade,—“how can I ever repay one thousandth part of what I owe to you? How can I ever show the feeling almost of adoration, with which you fill my whole heart?”

She was interrupted by the appearance of three little children, who now came into the garden through the house-door. They were a boy of three and a girl of about five years old, and a young infant still in arms, carried by a nurse-girl of about twelve or fourteen years of age.

The little creatures were dressed with the utmost simplicity, as was their young attendant, but every thing about the whole party was wholesome and carefully arranged; and cleanliness the most delicate,—that most difficult luxury to attain in poverty, and only to be attained by much exertion and virtuous effort, but which, when attained, nearly robs poverty of its most odious features,—a delicate cleanliness was observable in a remarkable degree, not only in the children but in their little maid.

The young lady they called Angela let go her friend's hand and stepped forward to meet the children, who, hand in hand, and with the other chubby hands and their bosoms filled with cowslips and violets, rushed joyfully towards her,—without noise, however, for the little creatures had been well instructed to preserve the utmost quietness when near their suffering mother.

"See! see, Angy!" and with their voices whispering, but their eyes sparkling with pleasure, and their rosy cheeks glowing with health and animation, they ran toward her with all that confidence of childhood when certain of meeting with sympathy in its little joys; a confidence which is the lovely attribute of young creatures who have been kindly and tenderly treated. "See! see, Angy! what beautiful flowers! all for mamma and you. Smell,—smell!—arn't they sweet, the cowslips and violets?"

"Biddy took us into a quite, quite new field, to-day; and there was a field behind it, oh, so full of flowers! But she daren't take us there, because it was an ugly stile, and she was afraid to let us get over, and couldn't help us because of the baby; he was naughty, and *wouldn't* be put down. But she said, if we'd be good, she'd ask you to come with us some day soon; and we were *very* good, and so you'll come."

"Oh!" took up the little boy, "there's such flowers in *that* field! such honeysuckle (red clover)! such buttercups! and long, long, purple and white flowers! "You'll come, won't you, Angy? There's a good Angy, do promise!"

"Oh yes, my little man, I'll promise: you know I'll do any thing for my own man when he's good."

Stooping down and kissing first one and then the other affectionately.

"And so I will for my dear little Lucinda, too; for she's always good, I think."

The answer of the little girl was to squeeze her sweet young face against her sister's gown, but to say nothing.

The sick mother had turned her pale face toward her children as they entered the garden, and she lay without moving, her eyes fixed upon the group; those eyes were moist, but it was with a sweet emotion of gratitude and admiration.

"And how's my sweetest baby?" said the young girl, going up to the infant, and taking it in her arms, the little thing crowing with pleasure, and patting her cheeks with infant fondness as she did so. "I'll take care of baby, Biddy: go in and get mistress's tea, and don't make a noise, for nurse is asleep; she has had a bad night and a hard day, take care not to disturb her."

"Now baby shall come and see mamma."

"Look, dearest Margaret, don't they look well? Pretty things! How baby grows! doesn't he? And Tommy and Lucy have got such a quantity of flowers for you."

The mother strove to rally, poor thing, and to raise herself a little and smile, and look cheerfully at her little children; but she coughed and gasped for breath, and every time that hollow cough sounded, it struck like a death-toll upon the heart of Angela.

"Come along, my little ones," she said, "poor mamma's but poorly to-day," as Margaret turned still paler and sunk back, closing her eyes. "Come to the house," she added, anxious to be relieved from the baby and to return to her patient. "Come along, that's good children."

The baby was a fine heavy boy, and as she held him in her arms the weight evidently pressed too much upon that slender, pliant figure, and bent her all on one side; the two other little children holding her dress, and dragging upon her: but she did not try to shake them off, she was only anxious to get them all into the house and to return to Margaret. And thus she was tottering and struggling along, when the glass-door once more opened and a new figure presented itself. It was that of an elderly woman, short and thin, and precise to stiffness in her attire, and with a somewhat forbidding countenance. She looked cross, but she looked sensible, and what we English call "thoroughly respectable." A peculiar characteristic which our nation holds particularly in reverence.

She was evidently a dependent, but she came up with all the authority of an old servant who has the advantage by some twenty or thirty years of the other members of the family in point of age, and who has lived so long among them that she considers herself quite a part and portion of its circle, makes its interests her own, and serves with a zeal and fidelity which are indefatigable, only requiring in return that all her fancies, whims, tempers, and wishes, shall be implicitly respected, and that nobody in the household but herself shall have a will of their own.

There was too much sense, too much spirit, in Angela—there had been in the days of their health too much vigor and spirit upon the part of the Captain and his Margaret—to allow this tendency to tyranny on the part of nurse (for nurse it was) to remain unresisted: it had been therefore kept till now in tolerable bounds; but nurse was of too much importance, and she felt it. She was far too valuable a person to be parted with; indeed, in spite of her temper, all sides loved each other too truly ever to think of a sep-

aration. Gradually and gradually such tempers always encroach upon the gentleness and forbearance of others; and it becomes more difficult every day to preserve peace, and at the same time maintain a proper independence of will. The sickness which had visited the little household had aggravated these evils; nurse had become more necessary, and she had been called upon to endure immense fatigues, and nurse's heart was grieved to the very core by the sorrow she saw; and, filled with care and anxiety for the fate of those she loved, she fretted inwardly, and grew crosser and crosser, and more and more tyrannical, every day. And this embittered still further the lot, and added still further to the difficulties, of those in whose service she would cheerfully have periled her life—in whose cause, indeed, she was every day making exertions and sacrifices almost greater than the sacrifice of life.

And now she comes hurrying down the steps, looking extremely cross, and saying,

"Give me the baby, this instant, Miss Angela! I tell you I *won't* have you carrying that big heavy child about. I tell you, it's enough to throw you all awry. Did you ever see any thing so crooked as you were walking just now? Give me the baby this instant, I say! If I catch Biddy a letting you have it and carrying it about in this way, I'll give it her well, that I will."

"It was all my fault, nurse—don't scold poor Biddy—I told her to give me the baby while she went to get tea. I can't think why you got out of your bed yourself, nurse: I am sure you are so tired you don't know what to do. I think its very naughty of *you*."

"Stuff and nonsense! Give me the baby, I say! And you, children, let alone pulling off your sister's gown in that manner! Can't you walk alone both of you? I'll teach you!"

"Goodness, nurse! pray let the little things be. And why mayn't I carry baby? I have not had him five minutes, and if it would hurt *me*, it must be much worse for poor Biddy, who is four or five years younger than I am, and you let *her* lug baby about all day long."

"To hear how people *will* talk!" was nurse's reply, in a very angry tone. "Miss Angela, I'm ashamed to hear such contrary nonsense fall from your lips! You and Biddy, indeed! when she's as stout and as square as the horseblock, and you are as lithe and as slender as you willow-tree. Every thing will bend and crook you, and nothing, take my word for it, will ever crook her. But do it, if you like—it's no business of mine; you may be as crooked as the little hunchback in the story, if you chose—what do I care? it's

no business of mine. You never mind what any body says—no, not if they're years and years wiser than yourself, not you. But see if I don't speak to your mamma about your carrying of that baby; for it's a shame and a sin to see a young child like yourself a put upon in all ways, and if nobody won't speak to misses about it, I will. Come along, you naughty little things, get into the house to your tea; I never saw such children before in my life! Come along to your tea; and don't you set up your pipes a-crying, master Tommy, and a disturbing of your mamma, or see if you don't get a good smack for it."

It was vain to interfere; an altercation would only have increased Nurse's ill-humor and the disturbance, which was now beginning to reach the ears of the invalid. As in most little scenes of this kind, there was nothing left for it but to submit.

Nurse re-entered the house with the three children, and Angela turned to the couch of her second mother and friend.

Margaret had again half raised herself, and was lying with her eyes open, watching them: it was plain she had heard what had passed.

"Nurse says but what is too true, my child," said she, as Angela came to her; and taking her hand, she pressed it with her hot and wasted fingers. "It is too, too hard upon you—in your loveliness and your fragility—in your sweet, tender youth—thus to be cumbered with *my* children—with *myself*—sweet and generous being! But Nurse is right, it is not enough cared for."

Don't talk so, Margaret; I love you, and I love those little ones dearly. But if I did not, what do I not owe you, and how can I ever, ever repay it to you and yours? You have been a true, a faithful mother to me; I should be a wretch, indeed, if I did not strive hard to play the part of a daughter to you. Why will that cross old woman ever recall the hateful thought that we are not as near in nature as we are in heart? Dear, dear children!—my *own* little brothers and sister! I have been more than your *own* child to you, Margaret—generous, judicious Margaret! and while I live your children shall find in me what I have found in you."

The wasted fingers again pressed the hand, and the bright, beautiful, large eyes were fixed upon her face. Then they turned upward—there was a moment of mental thanksgiving and prayer—

"He who has raised up this lovely girl, and given her in her youth that force and firmness, that ability and goodness, which is as a tower of strength to me, will preserve her in the course of her wondrous self-devotion and piety."

"My love," she said, "again and again I thank you—I trust to

you—I can not help it. In my weakness and my utter destitution—in the impossibility for me to do any thing for these poor little babes myself, where else can I turn? But then when Nurse comes, and, with her harsh, unwelcome truths, sets the selfishness of my conduct before me, I feel ashamed, and like one who, drowning herself, is dragging the friend who is struggling to save her, into the abyss. But one's children, Angela!—forgive me, dear, generous Angela—but what can I do with my children?"

"Margaret—again, and again, and again!—why will you talk in this way? Mother! you are, indeed, my mother! My own mother is to me but as a lovely and sacred vision of things I never really knew, but you have been a true mother to me: you have loved, tended, fondled, indulged me, as never mother did before; you have taught, tended, watched over, guided me, as never parent did before! The Almighty, when he gave such an incomparable friend as you have been to me, did not bestow the inestimable blessing upon an ungrateful heart. He never intended that, receiving all, when my turn came, I should refuse to repay. Say no more of it, Margaret, if you would not half break my heart. Let old Nurse grumble and scold—she only means kindly by us both after all, good woman; but let you and I understand each other, and let not these vain and almost wicked hesitations trouble the true faithful love and friendship we bear each other. Your children, mother, are my brothers and sister; let us have no division of thought among us: accept for them what you would and must accept if you were indeed my mother; for more—for more than mother have you been to me."

She spoke but the truth. Margaret had, indeed, performed these duties of perhaps the most difficult part in life that any one is called upon to play, with a fidelity and rectitude of purpose in accordance with her firm, uncompromising sense of duty, and with a gentleness, tenderness, and generosity of feeling, which had made an indelible impression upon the heart of her husband's child.

The sincerest affection and friendship had been the reward of this faithful performance of their several obligations, in a position so often embittered by mistaken views and want of mutual indulgence.

Angela felt deeply how much gratitude a part so played deserves, and Margaret received her dutiful filial observance with the same feelings.

She had, indeed, proved of signal advantage to Angela, who, much neglected in her youth, and deprived by circumstances of most of the ordinary means of improvement, found in her new mother not only the kindest and most indulgent of relations, but a very intelli-

gent and accomplished companion. Margaret was a young woman of very rare talents and acquirements. She possessed, moreover, that exquisite taste in the arts, which seems the gift of some happily constituted natures; and, well aware of the precarious nature of Angela's prospects, she had labored as assiduously as any professor who has to gain his bread in imparting the accomplishments she had acquired to her daughter. The talents of the pupil seemed to rival those of the preceptress, and the success was as gratifying as it was remarkable.

Until sickness and sorrow had invaded their dwelling, that little piano-forte, under the fingers of these two young women, had given forth tones, the beauty of which will be credited by those who have observed how far in music the dictates of a happy nature supersede all the teachings of experience; and the extraordinary facility with which some gifted beings acquire what surpasses, in the highest degree, all the results of the most laborious and persevering application.

Very immoral this, I am afraid; a very bad lesson for you, my young friends. But mind, I am speaking only of the arts, and this is a fact for which every one in life must prepare himself, and to which the patient toiler must submit as unrepiningly as to the other partialities of the great mother; consoling himself, if he can, with the reflection, that while some can effect every thing by the mere force of a happy temperament, others can advance only by strenuous application—that some *must* toil while others sleep, and that it is worse than useless to grumble about it.

CHAPTER VI.

The darts of anguish fix not where the seat
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the will supreme.

WORDSWORTH.

ANGELA had thus become an excellent musician. She was passionately fond of music, and had the highest possible pleasure in giving expression to her thoughts and feelings through this medium. She played wonderfully, and sang delightfully.

But the soul of music had for some time died in the little family, and the small piano-forte long been silent.

Margaret, too, sketched with extraordinary boldness and facility—these two accomplishments are, I think, often found united in the same person; and Angela very nearly equalled her in this, too: but their portfolios now lay side by side, unopened and forgotten. While Margaret struggled with suffering, and Angela read and prayed by her side. She was obliged, also, to ply her needle industriously, and to devote herself to assist Nurse in all her schemes of domestic economy. Nurse, as every one in the least acquainted with these sort of characters will expect to hear, was the most skillful and uncompromising of economists, and under her management the little income had produced twice the comfort it could otherwise have done.

But Nurse was now very much engaged in attending to Margaret, whom she waited upon by day, and in whose room she slept at night; for both she and the good young mother were resolute in forbidding Angela to share in this latter duty.

Nurse was often cross and irritable when her sleep was disturbed, or any thing vexed her and put her out of humor; all which Margaret bore with the most uncomplaining sweetness, her only care being to conceal these little acts of unkindness from her daughter. Angela, however, in consequence of Nurse being so much engaged by other things, and generally obliged to rest in the day, was compelled to devote herself to the housekeeping, which she did, endeavoring, with her best skill, to carry out all Nurse's plans for the general prosperity.

In the midst of all this anxiety, sorrow, privation, and exertion, no wonder that the little piano-forte continued closed, and the portfolios lay idly side by side.

But the habits Angela was thus attaining were worth all the accomplishments in the world. Self-command, activity, temper, prudence, a ready and cheerful performance of the duties of the day, united to a piety which some might have called, perhaps, enthusiastic, but which was as the wine of life to her—a perennial source of refreshment, encouragement, and happiness—a living fountain springing up to eternal life.

One word more before this sketch, which does so little justice to its subject, is finished.

Never was piety more free from all the dangers which attend upon an enthusiastic temper like hers. Serious, deeply serious, she was, yet free from all that moroseness of spirit which renders some forms of seriousness so repulsive. There was no arrogance, no self-righteousness, no comparison with or condemnation of others; there was little profession, and no display.

In the sweet serenity of that fair young creature's brow, in the cheerful alacrity with which each duty was performed, and the calm uncomplaining submission with which every evil was endured, you alone beheld the demonstration of the spirit which was ruling within.

* * * * *

How differently the lots among men are cast !

What strange contradictions do we meet with upon every side !

A tangled web, an inexplicable confusion, does life appear as we look upon it in the mass ; but, perhaps, were each individual story read by itself, there would be found throughout all these seeming anomalies the most wonderful scheme of moral education going on—opportunities for improvement which, though some have perverted, resisted, and thrown away, have not the less been offered in their several degrees to every man.

It seems something sad and pitiable, for instance, to reflect, that while one of these young creatures to whom I have introduced you was evidently being taxed beyond her powers, the other should appear to be deprived of every wholesome stimulant which could invite him to development and exertion.

That while she was summoned to the daily, hourly struggle with a hard and stern necessity, he should be so completely left to himself that he seemed to have neither an obligation to fulfill nor a duty to perform.

All the duties incident to his position in life, unfortunate circumstances had permitted him to evade ; and that fastidious delicacy, that sort of moral disgust, which was at once the ornament and the besetting temptation of his nature, inclined him but too readily to profit by circumstances which allowed him to abstract himself from the business and companionship of his fellow men, without any of that obvious neglect of duty which would have alarmed and awakened his conscience.

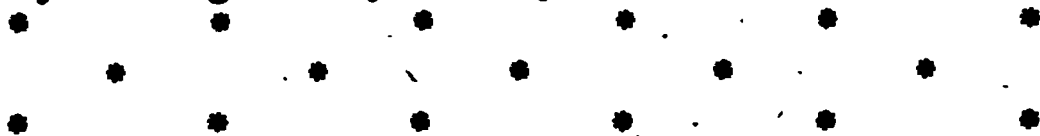
The day after his little adventure at the farmhouse was spent within doors.

It was rather a showery, chilly day. A new box of books had arrived from town ; he had tossed them over carelessly and listlessly, thinking of the far more real interests, of the sorrow and sickness at the farmhouse ; but tossing them over, his eye had caught the title of one which tempted him. He opened it, began to read, was soon lost in its contents ; and flung upon his sofa, his feet upon the opposite end raised almost to a level with his head which was half buried

in cushions, he read and read, throwing away one volume and snatching up another, till, hour succeeding to hour, his servant came in at last and announced his dinner.

He had, as every chapter finished, resolved that at the next he would close the book, and set forward upon a walk to inquire again after those for whom he had felt so much interest the night before; but one chapter was succeeded by another of equal interest, the delights of slothful indulgence—of that most bewitching form of slothful indolence, idle reading—prevailed, the call to active exertion was forgotten, and when the servant entered, he, starting up, was astonished to find it wanted only one quarter to eight o'clock. Too late, certainly, to think of going out now.

So, if you supposed he was in danger of falling in love with the young lady in the garden, you find you were mistaken.



Had he returned to the farmhouse, or could his fancy, which during his solitary meal was almost constantly dwelling there—could his fancy have penetrated into what was actually going on in those remote chambers—remote from, and, as it would appear, deserted by all the world, he would have seen reason to contrast, and with a bitter sympathy, the situation of those engaged in the real, pressing, daily struggle with want, and his own position of easy self-indulgence.

At this very hour—it was now approaching to nine o'clock—while he sat with the wine untasted before him, the large windows of the small dining-room he occupied being thrown open so as to admit a view of the shrubberies, garden, and woods behind, over which the pale moon, in calm splendor, was now slowly rising, while the last rays of the evening sun were fading in the west—meditating in a sort of pleasing though melancholy dream upon what he had seen the day before, yet quite unconscious, from his inexperience of such things, of the real sufferings such a scene represented—while he lay there, thinking more of the sweet countenance and lovely figure of Angela as she bent over her friend's couch, than of the struggle with disease and death in which the poor Margaret was engaged, far was he from realizing the troubled thoughts with which at this very moment the poor young creature was filled.

She had attended Margaret to her room, but not further; for Nurse, as I have said, jealous, apprehensive, and despotic, absolutely

forbade her entrance into that sleeping-chamber, which she considered indeed as filled with the miasma of disease. She could not find words to express her ideas, that stern woman—unlettered, though far from ignorant; but during a long life she had kept her eyes well open, had treasured up the results of her experience, and her conclusions were usually just and sound: fortunately for all that it was so, for they were maintained with the most invincible obstinacy.

It being impossible, under the circumstances, to separate Angela and Margaret entirely—a measure the old woman would have insisted upon had there been the slightest chance of submission—all she could do was to prevent her being exposed to more danger than was absolutely unavoidable.

In the open air she suffered the friends to be together without opposition; in the large sitting-room she grumbled, and submitted with an ill grace; but into the small sleeping-room occupied by Margaret she allowed no one to enter but herself. It is needless to say that the generous Margaret seconded Nurse in all her efforts to carry out these regulations.

Margaret and Nurse had retired; with the assistance of Biddy, Angela had put the little ones to bed, and now, wearied and exhausted, she had retired to her own little room.

She was healthy, but she was not strong; her firm self-discipline, the serenity of a mind upheld by the silent presence of the Almighty within, and by the calmness which arises from an unflinching devotion to duty, had at present preserved her from those weaknesses—uncertainties—those falterings and failings of the heart and nerves, which too often attend upon those young and susceptible as she was: but how long the *morale* would thus support the *physique* remained to be proved. Firm in her faith, she felt no undue anxiety upon the subject; *to-day* was all in all with her. Like others who have been sorely taxed, she strove only with the claims and sufferings of *to-day*; she let the morrow take charge of itself: sufficient unto the day was, in truth, the evil thereof.

And yet there were moments when thoughts of the morrow would force themselves upon her, and the future—a dark and clouded vision of inextricable perplexity—would suddenly, as it were, unroll itself before her, filling that young but constant heart with a thrill of terror.

And so it had been this night. She was very, very much tired; the day had been particularly oppressive to her; she had been reading aloud longer than usual; afterward the children had been cross,

wearisome, and naughty, as little children can not help being when they are themselves weary, and still more so when they are themselves hungry ; and the bread for supper had this night actually fallen short : there had not been enough for them all.

She had been forced to put the poor little things to bed with half a supper, and she had tasted scarcely any thing herself. Biddy had been dispatched to beg the loan of a little bread from Mrs. Whitwell, the mistress of the farmhouse ; but there was only sour-leavened bread to be got, which the children absolutely refused to eat, which she herself swallowed with difficulty, and over which Biddy openly pouted and murmured. Altogether it had worried and exhausted her. Her head ached, and, retiring to her own little room, she had sat down by the open window, and leaning her elbow upon the window-seat and her aching head upon her hand, had sat some time looking out upon the night.

But the night, so calm, so holy—the night which fills the soul with thoughts ineffable, leading it to plunge, as it were, at once into the infinite, and to stand collected and still, as if in the very presence of the Almighty—the composing influence of night was powerless the evening for her.

Night is the mother of calm and holy thoughts, but night is also the witching time of terror ; when the nerves have once given way, the darkness and the stillness only lend strength to those fearful phantoms which the excited imagination calls up.

They had been crying that night for bread !

Those children, dear to her as her own soul, had been crying for their suppers, and she had not bread.

It was the first time this had happened to her.

The supply had this week fallen short—but a little short, it is true ; the baker would call with the usual portion to-morrow : but the cry had, for the first time, been heard in that house, and she almost shook with terror when she asked herself, would it be the last ?

Their little income—a widow's pension of a captain in a foot regiment—was every thing they possessed in the world.

How had this happened ?

Was Margaret utterly destitute ? had Angela's mother been penniless ? had the captain literally nothing but his commission ? almost, literally nothing.

In these times of ours, it is, happily, rare that such destitution can or does occur ; every body has their little fortune of some sort or other provided by their parents ; there is an aunt or an uncle, or

a settlement, or a something—every body is so well off now. But horrible cases of suffering and destitution *do* occur, nevertheless, and those classes of society which belong to the professions of church and arms are more especially exposed to them; and this was a case in point.

Margaret's father had been a brave soldier of fortune. He was in the king's army, but on service in India. Possessing little or nothing but his commission, he had expended all his little savings not long before in purchasing his rank as lieutenant-colonel, intending after this to insure his life, and secure something to his only daughter. He fell, storming a fort, at the head of his men, in one of those gallant and daring feats of arms which, glorious as they are, are soon forgotten in the hurry and din of war, and remembered only by a few sympathizing and admiring companions. He fell bravely in the performance of his military duty, and his hardly-earned commission became the property of the crown, and was given to a more fortunate man.

The insurance had not been completed, the necessary letters being on their way to Europe, when this good and gallant officer fell. He left no widow to receive a pension; the small pittance allowed to the child was her only resource.

The captain and she had loved and been betrothed before. He would not listen to her remonstrances; he married, and took her home to his Angela. A small private fortune which he possessed he had been tempted, by the advice of a friend, to invest in some flattering speculation, hoping to improve it and maintain his increasing family in comfort. He had lost it all.

Margaret had never ceased to reproach herself for the ungenerous facility, as she thought it, with which she had yielded to the solicitations of the man, so fondly and deeply beloved. She always looked upon herself as the injurer of his daughter, and she had endeavored to compensate to her, by taking all the pains that were possible in improving her, and completing her education. Angela, on her side, was far from viewing the matter in this light; she sincerely valued and very tenderly loved the kind and most precious friend which, by her father's marriage, she had obtained; and while Margaret performed her duties with a care and devotedness rare even among real mothers, Angela repaid it with a mixture of affection, respect, and docility, not common even among real daughters. Since her husband's death, indeed, Margaret's scruples and remorse had been, in some degree, relieved, for the pension upon which they all subsisted could alone be claimed by her in the character of the widow. Had

the marriage never taken place, Angela would have been nearly destitute.

This is the brief history of what had brought these inhabitants of the retired farmhouse into their present situation and relations.

CHAPTER VII.

E mirando la vergine gagliarda
Esporre il petto per l'amaté mura.

TASSO.

It was a contrast, certainly, and a strong one.

There sat, or half lay, the *man*, extended in a most comfortable arm-chair, after a delicate repast—slight enough, it is true, for certainly he was no epicure—listening to the warbling of the nightingales in the woods, gazing upon the beautiful effect of the full moon as she rose upon the horizon, and thinking of that lovely young creature he had seen the day before—fancying her gliding among the beautiful lights and fleeting shadows formed by the moon gleaming amid the branches of the shrubbery—and of the walk he would take the next day to reconnoiter the farm-house again.

All with him vague, imaginative, easy, pleasant.

She was now holding a little faded purse in her hand, and slowly counting and dividing its contents.

She had supped, or endeavored to sup, upon that sour-leavened bread. She was occupied in calculating how she should provide bread enough of any kind for those she had to feed.

The rent!

First, she laid aside the money—the sacred sum devoted to the rent; then what would be necessary to pay the baker's bill upon the next day. Alas, how little was left! Could she afford to buy more!—it was impossible. Could she diminish her household?—equally so.

To part with Nurse could not be thought of for a moment. What was Margaret to do without her? Besides, Nurse was part of themselves; she was one of the family.

Biddy! could she part with Biddy? Biddy had a tremendous appetite. Alas! to what considerations are the very poor, those poorest of the poor—those who can not labor with their hands, and dig and

delve—obliged to submit. Biddy was a fine, healthy girl, and when she had been out walking with the children, there seemed no end to the bread and cheese she could devour.

It was Biddy's appetite which had drawn too heavily upon the little store, and made it run short. Biddy, too, had principles of her own. She worked like a horse, she thought, and had a right to her food, at least; and she was hungry, and did not spare the loaf; and she had never eat sour, unleavened bread at her father's, and didn't see why she should do it now.

Such were her principles, yet she was far from being an ungenerous girl; she loved the baby to idolatry, was a little tyrannical, or so inclined, to the other children, as girls of her age generally are, but a good girl, upon the whole.

But to part with Biddy was as impossible as it appeared to be to get bread to feed her. At the age of the baby, it absolutely required constant attendance. Nurse was almost wholly engaged with her mistress, and with the rest her own age and delicate health required; and for Angela to take charge of an infant of that age—too large for her to carry, and too little to walk itself—was out of the question.

There was no help for it; difficulties presented themselves upon every side. Where should she get bread?

A little sum had been set aside to the purchase of comforts for her invalid: could she appropriate this?

How sorrowfully did she sit there, counting and recounting her money—vainly hoping to find it a little more than she thought it.

The cost of *his* one little meal would have supported them all for a fortnight.

Her head ached so!

She was obliged to put the money in the purse again, and to lie down, but she could not sleep. She lay long awake, revolving all the possible means to get a little money. There was only her needle; all other occupations in this remote place were out of the question. She would ask Mrs. Whitwell to give her some sewing. Why had she never thought of this before?

There was comfort in this thought; and as the cocks in the farmyard began to lift up their voices and salute the dawn, Angela fell asleep.

Cheerily and pleasantly rose the sun.

A delightful early summer morning it was.

The dew lay heavy on the grass, bending down the rich heads of purple clover, clothing every bud and blade with pearls; the whole

air was filled with freshness and sweetness, and the birds were singing in chorus among the bushes and hedges.

He was up early, had put on his old coat and hat again, and with his sketch-book in his hand, and his case of pencils in his pocket, had, after a night of sweet and happy sleep, set forward with cheerful alacrity, and was crossing the fields, leaping over stiles and gates, and pursuing the path which led to Mr. Whitwell's farm.

He thought he knew his way perfectly, and was certain that Rover, at least, would; but Rover had business of his own that morning: he amused himself, as he went along, in hunting larks, and putting up leverets; and so busy was he, that he was any thing but a guide; and so he and his master lost their way, and got into a set of fields different from those they had crossed before. They came at last to a prodigiously high hedge. It was of mingled hawthorn and hornbeam, and filled with tall hedge-row trees; and it was hung with brambles and wild roses, so as to be perfectly impervious: the path led to a little rail-stile in the middle of it.

This hedge and another, if possible, still higher and still thicker, surrounded a pretty considerable oblong field, filled with high grass; the pathway led through it to another narrow stile of the same sort, through the opening made by which, what seemed a large pasture, now occupied by cattle, might just be descried. The first stile, which he was now approaching, intending to cross it, was overhung by such a remarkably beautiful bush of maple and wild briar mingled, and looked so picturesque in the light, that he stopped, unfolded his sketch-book, and seated himself to sketch.

He had been thus employed some little time, when he was suddenly aroused by the tremendous roar and screaming of a bull, and the shrieks of women and children, issuing from the field beyond.

To fling down his portfolio, seize his stick, spring over the stile, cross the intervening field, and enter the other, was the work of scarcely two seconds.

The field he came into was large; on the other side, and exactly opposite to him, a girl with an infant in her arms, and two little children following her, all screaming and crying in the utmost agony of terror, were endeavoring to make their escape from an enormous bull, who, his tail erect, his crest bristling with rage, was standing tearing up the ground, and tossing the fragments over his head, and bellowing and screaming aloud.

He was not running forward, for before him stood courageously in his path, with her large distended eye fixed upon him, a young, slender girl, of about nineteen, facing him resolutely.

The animal appeared to be worked up almost to a frenzy of rage by this unexpected opposition, and yet, subdued by the steady gaze of the dauntless young creature—magnetized, as it were, and unable to advance—was spending his fury in tearing up the turf beneath his feet with loud cries.

The girl looked deadly pale as, her eye fixed steadily upon his, she slowly retreated, step by step, backward. She thus gave the other girl and the children opportunity to escape, which they lost no time in doing, perfectly wild with terror, and never once looking behind them.

He took in the whole scene with one glance, and he hurried instantly to the rescue, as, setting his little dog upon the heels of the bull, he thus diverted the rage of the animal.

“Run, run for it!” he cried, as the bull turned fiercely, and catching the poor little dog upon his horns, first tossed him high in the air, and then, bending down his head, rushed furiously upon his new antagonist.

With extraordinary presence of mind and agility Carteret avoided the blow, and springing at the bushes of a wide-spreading oak which most fortunately stood near, at one bound swung himself up into the tree, and thus escaped the fury of his enemy in a dexterous, rather than in a very heroic manner, it may be thought; but heroic or not, there he sat in perfect safety, and viewed at his leisure the field of battle.

He saw that the nurse and little children had already scrambled over the opposite stile, and still screaming and crying with all their might, were running through the field beyond. But the young girl who had so courageously risked her own life to save theirs, having retreated to the stile, stood there, watching the issue of the combat, as if she found it impossible to forsake her rescuer, and, a stone in each hand, which she had stooped and picked up, appeared waiting, ready prepared to assist him, if necessary.

When she saw the young gentleman, however, safely ensconced in a tree, which the bull kept pacing round and round, and pawing the ground, and bellowing at intervals with all his might, seeming resolved upon watching there till he could have vengeance upon his adversary, she sprang over the stile, and signing to him that she was going to call assistance, disappeared.

In a quarter of an hour or less, she returned with two or three stout men armed with pitchforks, who, attacking the bull, the huge animal, sullenly grumbling, and his suppressed roar sounding like the distant murmurs of a retiring thunder-cloud, was driven from

the field, which the young lady then entered, and came up to thank her preserver and inquire after his little dog.

The poor animal had suffered terribly—almost every bone in his body seemed broken: he was stunned, and at first appeared to have been killed; but as his master tenderly raised him from the grass in his arms, the poor little creature opened his eyes, looked up in his face with patient and grateful affection, and began to lick his hand.

“He is not quite dead,” said Angela, tenderly. “Poor little thing! will you let me carry him? I think I can lay him in my shawl more comfortably than in your arms. Oh, sir, how very, very much we are all obliged to you!”

“You look pale still. Were you not horridly frightened?”

“Dreadfully! It seems to me as if I never in my life knew what terror was before.”

“How could you find resolution to stand it—how could you help running away with the rest? I never saw such a noble instance of courage in my life!” he said, looking at her with eyes in which the most lively admiration was painted.

“I don’t know; I had read of such a thing being done. It flashed into my mind at the moment, as the only chance of saving these poor little children.”

“Wonderful! And so young and delicate as you are, too!”

“It seems to me all like a dream, now it is over,” she said with perfect simplicity, as if she were quite unconscious of having performed an act of extraordinary heroism; “but I do not know what would have become of me if you had not so very, very generously exposed your life to save mine. And your poor little dog! how he moans! yet so softly! What a good, good little thing he is! Will you not carry him to Mr. Whitwell’s farm? the men there may know how to treat him. And if you will give me leave, I will keep him and take care of him till he is better; and then some of the boys will, I am sure, bring him home to you, if you will tell us where you live.”

“You will let me go with you to Mr. Whitwell’s, won’t you?” said he; “for I can not be easy without knowing what to think of the poor little fellow’s case. And besides, you do tremble so! Will you not take my arm? Nay, nay, do not faint.”

She was very near doing it at last, however. She had made unparalleled efforts to keep her spirits from failing her, but her nerves at last gave way. She began to tremble in every limb, and could hardly keep herself from falling.

"Thank you, I will sit down a little, if you please, upon the stile. I shall be better in a moment; I can't think what it is."

He was obliged to put his arm around her, and almost carry her toward the stile. He supported her against the bank, and ran to fetch some water in his hat from a little pond near.

He felt a strange and unwonted sensation coming over him, as his arms supported her: he thought he had never seen any thing so lovely as were her half-closing eyes; and were ever cheeks so very beautiful in their paleness?—and that soft brown hair, and her long throat bending like a flower-stem?

Till the water which he threw over her face revived her, and the color began to come again, and those sweet eyes to open, and to look up at him with such beautiful thankfulness in them—and that was more beautiful still!—he could have almost wished she might never be able to move; he could have stood hanging there over her for ever!

But she was not one accustomed to faint away, and lie there looking helpless and interesting; she soon recovered herself, and rose up: but she could not, however, stand very well, and she was forced—with or against her will, who shall say?—to rest upon his arm; and so, she resting upon his arm, and he carrying the little dog wrapped in her shawl, they slowly approached Mr. Whitwell's house, and entered the orchard, passing through the garden gate.

There was no one there. Margaret had not yet left her room; the children had rushed in through the fold-yard; but just as the two entered the orchard, Nurse was seen at the glass-door, rushing through, and looking furious.

"Where is she? Where is she? Left to herself, all alone, the blessed one! Oh! Biddy! Biddy! If you'd only been tossed by the bull yourself! but there was the baby. Oh! those children! those children! they'll be the death of her, a generous angel! Oh, you're there, are you, Miss Angela? all safe and sound, I declare; and such a fright as you've given my poor heart! I vow I think I never shall get over it. And you *will* take those walks to please the children, you *will*, in spite of all I can say! You're the provokingest girl in the world! I'm sure you deserved to be tossed by the bull a hundred thousand times! Well, well, you're not hurt, I see; and don't tell Mrs. Nevil, pray, for the fright, though it's all over, will half kill her. And as for the children, they're out of their senses with terror; I think they'll never have done screaming; I'd half a mind to whip 'em all round, and so I told 'em."

"Poor little things!" said Angela, dropping the arm of her com-

panion and hastening forward, "let me go and comfort them, poor little fellows!"

"Are you the gentleman as saved her life?" said Nurse, now approaching Mr. Carteret; "and as the men drove the bull from under the tree for?"

"Yes," said he; "and here is this poor little animal, the only one of the party really hurt, I hope. Good woman, help me to somebody who will tell me what can be done for him."

"He's badly hurt, poor beast, sure enough. We'll step into the back kitchen and see what can be done," said Nurse, eyeing the handsome young man with a somewhat suspicious air, as Mrs. Whitwell had done before. He made, it is true, a sufficiently questionable appearance at that moment, with his old white hat and his old whity-brown coat, the one battered to pieces, and the other torn in several places—the natural consequences of his sudden ascent into the tree.

The men in the back kitchen were refreshing themselves after the encounter with the bull, and, after the manner of their kind, making themselves sufficiently merry at the expense of the young gentleman who had thus managed to escape danger.

"He looked, stuck up there, for all the world, like a scarecrow in a cherry-tree," said one.

"And old Tom watching him as a cat watches a bird," put in another; "only he was roaring and foaming all like a mad thing; but only to make fun, it's my belief, and put the young one up there in a tremble: for he turned before our pitchforks at the first moment, and went away grumbling home as quiet as a cosset lamb."

"The lad, all the time, up there, quaking like a water-wagtail. I'll be sworn he'll not be over-ready to attack a good short-horn again. Our Tom's a rare one for teaching these Lonnoners to look about them; and he's one, I'll engage, by the cut of his coat, never seed a bull before, but a mad un driven to Smithfield Market, mayhap."

"Shocking, bad hat," &c. &c.

"My good fellows," began the young nobleman, entering the kitchen, and addressing the countrymen with that air of unquestioned authority which seems habitual to those of his rank and station, "this poor little dog of mine has got sadly hurt by the bull. Do you, any of you, know any thing of bone-setting? It seems to me that both his legs are broken."

The men eyed him a few seconds in a doubtful sort of manner; the air he assumed and his dress being so sadly at variance.

One of them, however, at last got up from his seat, though somewhat sulkily, and said,—

(The English countryman is as surly and sulky as his namesake, the short-horn, if he thinks he is treated with the least undue want of respect.)

“Yes, I’ve seen a little of dog-doctoring in my time; so hand him over to me, man,” looking significantly at his companions, with his tongue in his cheek. “Poor fellow, he’s badly hurt! A dog can’t climb trees like a cat, you see, and that’s wherefore he got tossed. Heave him up to the light, young man. Yes, I see both his legs are broke.”

“Can you set them for me? But don’t say that you can, if you can’t, though, and make the poor fellow a cripple for life. I dare say there is some farrier or dog-doctor near at hand; and if one of you will fetch him, I will reward him handsomely.”

The men exchanged grins and glances again.

“Our Jem can set a bone as well as any of ’em,” said one, “I’ll be sworn; but,” rising lazily, “if nothing but a reg’lar dog-doctor will serve your turn, why, then, old Jenks down i’th’ village is a fine hand at bone-setting.”

“Fetch him, then, my good fellow, and here’s half a crown for your trouble.”

It is astonishing how the young man rose in public opinion at this. John Bull has a sad prejudice in favor of those who do things handsome, as he calls it.

“And,” continued Carteret, “I believe you are the same men who rescued me from my perch in the oak tree, aren’t you? There’s a couple of sovereigns for you—to drink my health, I suppose I ought to say; but I am somewhat of a temperance man, and I wish you would spend it in some other way.”

“Thank your honor.”

And locks were twitched, according to the old fashion of rural salutes.

“As you’re a temperance man, we’ll see what can be done—though a pot of ale’s a dish for a king, to my mind, and ever will be.”

“In moderation, perhaps; but good ale has made more beggars than kings, after all,” said Cartaret, carelessly: he was not, however, given to preaching or enforcing of doctrine in any way; he was too indolent, and had really too little faith in mankind for that.

And, besides, he wanted to get his dog doctored, and to return to the apartment at the other end of the house, for he had a scheme in his head.

CHAPTER VIII.

Fervent in doing well, with every nerve
Still pressing on, forgetful of the past.

THOMSON.

THE dog-doctor soon appeared—a little, dry, withered, sagacious-looking old man he was—the child of his own practice and experience, shrewd, observing, knowing, and obstinate—a character which used to be common in rural villages, but which the universal diffusion of light is now rapidly clearing away.

This cunning old leech had his own recipes and secrets; and the cures he performed upon man and beast were certainly wonderful. And no sooner had Carteret seen him, than the plan he had already secretly set his heart upon, but did not exactly know how to accomplish, began to take form, and to become capable of execution.

This important scheme was no less than that of contriving to render it necessary, under some pretense or other, to accept the young lady's offer to leave his dog in her charge, in order to give himself a pretense of calling again, and thus keeping up an acquaintance so auspiciously begun.

To keep up the acquaintance being what his heart was set upon, chiefly, to his credit be it said, from a sentiment of the sincerest compassion, and the most disinterested desire to be of service, if possible, to those so poor, so suffering, and so friendless: but likewise because a romantic scheme, such as has been known in actual life to enter, upon occasions, into a young man's head—dimly and vaguely, it is true, but yet did begin to take a certain form to his fancy.

He was very much charmed with the young lady; there can be no doubt of that. His heart was entirely at liberty, though himself, perhaps, not altogether so. This latter circumstance he chose to overlook.

There was a sort of something in the air between him and a certain cousin of his; but he had never pledged himself exactly to it, and he had long chosen to believe, that as he certainly cared not for his cousin the least in the world, so she returned the compliment by not caring the least in the world for him; and thus he considered himself at liberty to please his own taste, and, moreover, had been all along resolved so to do.

Indeed, the sort of vague idea of how much he should like to be loved merely upon his own account, without reference to his fortune or station (one of those aspirations of sincere and delicate minds), had long possessed him—and how opportune was this occasion for gratifying his romance for winning a heart, instead of obtaining merely a hand, if he chose to make use of it—this, perhaps, was at present as far as his thoughts went.

But he was upon the precincts, it is plain, if not actually already crossing the boundary of the Armidan garden of love—that paradise of the soul—as figured forth by the poet, who had known these dear delusions but too well:—

In lieto aspetto il bel giardin s'asperse
Acque stagnanti, mobili cristalli,
Fior vari, e varie piante, herbe diverse,
Apriche collinette, ombrose valli
L'aura non ch' altro è de la maga effetto ;
L'aura che rende gli alberi fioriti.

How far he would wander amid these magical mazes, how far he led away,—

Fra melodie sì tenera e fra tante
Vaghezzi, allettatrici, e lusinghieri,

he never troubled himself to inquire.

It was enough that the first aspect was so enchanting.

He had not been sufficiently accustomed seriously to weigh the consequences of his actions. His former life, vague and imaginative—a poet's dream, rather than the rational prose of daily life—disposed him but too well for the romantic story he was now about to begin.

Now he is at the door of the large apartment so often mentioned, carrying his little dog, with his two poor tiny legs carefully bound up in bands of linen, in his arms; and he knocks with his knee, and, being told to enter, pushes the open door, and does as he is bid.

Margaret was now dressed, and was lying upon the sofa. Angela was sitting at the table cutting out what seemed a child's frock. The two little children were playing together upon the steps, and Biddy and the baby were walking about in the garden.

The two huge walnut-trees threw their green shadows upon the casement windows, which were both open, pleasantly shading the light which the sun, now pretty high, threw into the room; and a cool and pleasant obscurity pervaded the apartment, aided by the

vines and eglantines which, trained against the wall, hung over the windows, and filled the air with a faint but sweet odor.

The day was perfectly still; not a sound was heard from the garden; every bird was reposing and silent in the mid-day sun; Nero slumbering and quiet: he raised his head once, it is true, upon seeing the young man enter, but with a low growl laid it down again.

The quick breathing of the invalid alone disturbed the general silence, giving a tragic interest to this scene of seclusion and tranquillity—a scene which, otherwise, might have seemed as one rather belonging to some pastoral romance than to this world of sin and trouble.

“Shall I disturb you?” said he, as he entered, in such a sweet voice.

One of those voices so penetrating, so full of charm—a voice which, in itself, is a pledge of refinement, delicacy, and feeling. And he had such an interesting countenance and manner!

In spite of his many faults, he was really such a very, very delightful young man.

“Shall I disturb you? Pray do not let me disturb you, or I must run away.”

“Indeed you will not disturb me,” said Margaret, who had by this time learned the whole history of the morning’s adventure, and who had been lying there impatient to see and thank the preserver of Angela and her little ones.

“Indeed you will not disturb me. I have been only afraid you might have left the farm without giving me an opportunity of thanking you for your generous interference; to which, under God, I owe the preservation of my dear Angela and of my poor little children.”

“Miss Angela had, by her extraordinary courage, left me little to do—nothing at all for them, and but little for herself.”

And as he spoke, the bright vision flashed upon his imagination, the picture of that fair and slender creature, standing confronting the terrible animal, and taming and subduing brute violence by her courage—he thought of Una and her lion—he thought of virgin saints and martyrs.

He was lost, in short, in his own thoughts for a moment; and, instead of saying more, he turned to look at her.

She was there at the table, her pretty head and neck bent down to her work, busy cutting out the child’s frock.

He thought her, and he felt her to be, while thus engaged in simple domestic occupation, if possible, still more interesting than in her ecstasy of heroic courage—“An angel, yet a woman still.”

Dearer still as the woman than as the angel.

Angela's heart was beating, it must be confessed; a little quicker than perhaps it ought to have done, for a young lady of so much discretion as she was; and a color, delicate as that of the blush-rose, *would* come into her cheeks—she could not help it; and that was the reason, perhaps, that she was, at that moment, so particularly intent upon the little child's frock.

"Dear Angela," said Margaret, "how was this? you never told me this!"

"I thought it would only frighten you, Margaret; and, indeed, it all passed so rapidly, that I hardly know how it was, except that this gentleman by his courage saved us all, and that this poor little dog was sadly hurt in helping him to turn the bull." And as she said this, she rose from her seat and went up to him.

"Poor little thing! I am afraid he is very much hurt."

"Very much; but in the best of causes, my poor little Rover," he said, looking down affectionately at him. "And, I am sure, if he could speak, so he would say for himself, Miss Angela. But if he could speak——," hesitating a little, but impatient to come to the point, "he would, I believe, ask you to do him a very great favor."

"And that, I am sure, I would not refuse him," said she, passing her hand over his pretty, smooth, black head and long curly ears.

"Poor little dog! what shall I do for him?"

"Will you let him stay with you for a few days? I am ashamed to give you so much trouble, and feel as if it were a great presumption in me to ask such a favor from you; but it is plain he suffers very much in being moved, and I have a long way to go home; if it would not be too great a favor to ask——" said he, persuasively; for there was a kind of hesitation and perplexity in her eyes.

Far was he from divining what narrow, grinding poverty occasioned it: the little dog's bread and milk was an expense at which she felt alarmed, that it would be a consideration.

"My *dear* Angela!" cried Margaret, looking at her with some surprise.

Margaret attributed this reluctance to a sort of shyness—a girlish shyness—which she thought sadly out of place at this moment, and to the man who had just saved her life.

"Undoubtedly, sir, you will do us a great favor by leaving the little dog with us. We shall be but too glad to have an opportunity of showing our gratitude to him. The two invalids will do very well together. Lay him upon my cushion, Angela. There, take care, little thing."

He deposited the animal in Angela's arms, who soon laid him where he was at ease, and fell asleep.

Angela was as glad to keep him as, I believe, Carteret could possibly be to leave him, if the real truth were told.

They had been standing till now.

"Will you not sit down, sir?" said Margaret, looking at a chair.

He was as much struck and pleased by the ease and politeness of Margaret's manner, as by the simplicity and loveliness of Angela.

He was very glad to be asked to sit down, and took a seat by Margaret's couch immediately. The invalid fixed her bright blue eyes upon him, with a curiosity not quite unmingled with a certain anxiety.

He understood their-meaning, and, in reply, said,—

"Before I accepted your invitation to sit down, I think, as there is no one else to do it for me, I should have had the grace to introduce myself. My name is Carteret, and I call myself an artist."

Margaret's eyes asked for something more.

"My father and mother are both living, and are now in Italy. My father's circumstances are not what they once were, quite. I am fond of drawing, and make it my study. Whether my pictures will ever afford me a maintenance, is more than doubtful; but if an hereditary passion for art will help me, I shall do something."

The story was confirmed by the entrance of Kitty, who brought in her hand the portfolio he had dropped in the field when attacking the bull.

She gave it him, saying,—

"I believe this is yours, sir?"

"Yes, it is," said he; "I must have dropped it, when I sprang into the tree. Thank you."

And another half-crown.

Kitty smiled, and retired.

Angela could almost have wished she could have been the fortunate finder of the portfolio, and could thus have earned an unexpected half-crown.

Margaret's eyes were now fixed upon the book.

"Perhaps you may be good enough to like to look at some of my attempts?" said he.

"I was once very fond of drawing, myself," said Margaret; "and it is a very great pleasure to me still to see good drawings."

"I am afraid mine will not deserve to come into that category," he replied, untying the sketch-book, or portfolio, but somewhat anxiously hiding the first page, saying,—

"Oh, that's nothing! I should be ashamed to show you that."

He began to display his sketches.

They were splendidly done. The hand of true genius—of a master in his art—was visible in every line.

"Beautiful!" said Margaret, looking up at Angela, who stood over her. "How different from what you or I have ever done! This is art, indeed!"

"Does Miss Angela draw?" turning to her with a look of interest, though evidently indifferent to the praise he himself received.

"A very little," said she, in the usual depreciating phrase; sincere enough in her at the moment, for she thought how very, very poor, her performances were in comparison with his.

It really was too charmingly like a romance—a real, printed romance—to find so much loveliness, such manners, and such accomplishments, all buried in this lone farmhouse!

As Sterne says of his adventures, "Such things never happen but to sentimental travelers."

"Perhaps, now I have shown you my rough scrawls, you will let me see something of yours? I am so passionately fond of drawing," he said, shutting his portfolio.

She hesitated.

"Do, Angela, my dear," said Margaret.

Now Margaret was at once and completely taken in. It never entered into her head to doubt the young man's story, every syllable of which, be it observed, though equivocal, was in fact true. There was a simplicity in his manner, and a something so truly polished and refined in his address, that she felt convinced he was a gentleman and a man of education. No swindler, no impostor, no man of degraded connections or mean associations, she felt assured, could have united so much manner with such a perfect simplicity and freedom from art or affectation. His masterly drawings convinced her that he was, as he implied, a professor; for Margaret had studied in Italy herself, had a very high conception of true art, and no very high opinion of amateur performers in general.

She had lived out of the world of late years, and was not aware that drawing had lately begun to make part of a gentleman's education.

In the many meditations which occupied the mind of the good Margaret, as she lay helpless upon her sick couch, as to the future fate of Angela and her little ones, she had dwelt with considerable satisfaction upon the talents her eldest daughter possessed, which had been so much improved by her own care and instruction; and

she trusted that they might afford the means of obtaining a livelihood to herself at least, and perhaps the opportunity, in some way or other, of providing for her destitute little brothers and sister.

It now struck Margaret, that the criticisms of this young artist might be of essential service to Angela. She thought it probable—nay, certain—that he would call again. Artists sometimes take an interest in directing the efforts of those possessed of genius and energy, who are less advanced than themselves; perhaps this young man might give a few hints, and perhaps almost lessons, which she felt might prove invaluable.

Those who are very poor, who are struggling day by day against the most pressing wants of existence, have little attention to bestow upon those delicate refinements which obstruct, in some degree, the direct course of life. They look straight forward—they are forced to look straight forward—to the main point.

Margaret, intent upon the hope to increase her daughter's proficiency in these accomplishments—a proficiency of such vital importance to her future independence—quite forgot what a young, engaging man she was anxious to secure as an instructor. Besides, Margaret had been bred in that sphere of life which effectually separates the pupil from the instructor; and it would never have entered into her head that any well-educated girl would think of falling in love with her drawing-master.

Intent upon her object, she never thought of regarding Mr. Cartret in any other light. She sunk the man altogether in the artist, as many have done before her; and her thoughts never traveled toward Armida gardens, or any ideas of that nature.

"Fetch your portfolio, my dear Angela," said she; "it is quite true our attempts will appear poor indeed by the side of this gentleman's: but I think, considering the little instruction you have had, there is some merit in your drawings. I should be glad to hear the criticisms of a less partial judge than myself."

Angela now left the room to fetch her portfolio; and when she was gone Margaret said—

"Will you excuse my asking you one question? Did I understand you rightly when you said you meant to make art your profession—your—your maintenance?"

"That was certainly what I intended to imply."

"For great talents like yours, I doubt not, it affords a full and sufficient independence." She went on—"Excuse me, sir, the subject is of the greatest importance to me; but does your experience in these things enable you to tell me what prospect it might

hold out for a young girl like Angela, unprotected and unsupported as she soon must be? Would she be likely, think you, to find an opportunity of turning her talents to account, and securing to herself a livelihood?"

He hesitated.

"True," said she, thinking she understood the cause of his hesitation perfectly; "you should see her drawings first."

Angela returned with her portfolio.

The drawings were full of genius; but, as might have been expected, equally full of faults.

The genius delighted him, the faults interested him. To the other sources of the interest which she had excited was at once added that peculiar interest which a true artist takes in the development of a fine but unassisted talent.

He laid the portfolio upon the table, pushing away without any ceremony all the pieces of muslin, the thread-reels and needle-books, and other evidences of her industry, which were scattered upon it. One thing was taken out after another, and examined with great attention.

"Your lights are confused here, you see—this composition is defective—these colors want harmony. Ah! what is this? This is *really* beautiful! How greatly you have improved as you went on! But even here, do you perceive, there is a want of art in ——"

And so on. The examination and the criticisms seemed as if they would never come to an end.

"If it were not too presumptuous to make such a proposal, how I should like to give you a few lessons!" said he, at last, turning his charming eyes full upon her. "My occasions will detain me in these parts some weeks longer. If you would let me call now and then, I think I could help you. "I really think I could," turning to Margaret—"there is such a wonderful aptitude; but it does want a little cultivation—a little help. I am but a poor artist myself, but I have had excellent lessons abroad. I really think I could be of some use. Will you let me try? May I call again the day after tomorrow? I will bring my colors, and some copies I have by me. I really think I could help you."

The cheeks of Angela were now tingling with pleasure—an artist's true pleasure—from the hope of receiving instruction, of enjoying that delightful development of the ideas which good instruction affords to real talent; and there was—but she did not once think of that—something more than a mere artist's pleasure, as her eyes followed his earnest, enthusiastic, kindly countenance, as he turned to Margaret.

A faint gleam of joy spread over poor Margaret's countenance, and a throb of happiness once more visited her forlorn heart as the offer was made. She, too, felt bewitched by this young man, and she was gratified beyond expression at receiving this offer so in accordance with her secret wishes.

"You are only too good," said she; "and nothing but the fear of encroaching upon your time can prevent me from accepting your offer. But—but——"

Angela's eyes fell to the ground, and she colored crimson, for she guessed what Margaret was about to say; she knew it ought to be said, however disagreeable: if Margaret had wanted courage to say it, she must have done it herself.

"But—but—you must not let us encroach much upon your time. I have always thought"—(with considerable effort at last it burst forth)—"that frankness in cases like ours is the best—nay, the only course. I ought to tell you at once, that we cannot *afford* to indulge ourselves with instruction."

He colored as deeply as either of them had done at this, and began to stammer and hesitate very much, as he said,—

"Oh, no such thing! Pray do not mistake me. I have no occupation that could the least interfere . . . my time is entirely my own . . . I assure you there is not the slightest real necessity . . . I hope you understand my meaning . . . I am ashamed not to have made myself understood at first."

"I thought I did understand you," said Margaret, "but I could not be sure; at all events, it is right that we should perfectly understand each other now. I did not mean to hurt you, (seeing his distress and confusion). I beg your pardon; pray excuse me."

He could not immediately recover his composure; he was quite thrown into disorder. He had not expected the part he had intended to play would be carried out so literally into all its consequences. He called himself a too foolish fellow to be so disturbed by it. The very thing he ought to have wished. But to be looked upon as a regular paid drawing-master! Had he pitched his assumed character too low?

"It may be pride in me," said he, at length; and he certainly felt proud enough while saying it; "but you mistook me. I do not mean to make the giving lessons to be a part of my profession."

"I did not mistake you," said Margaret, gently. "I beg your pardon; I ought to have guessed as much by the—the——. But when so many accomplished artists *do* oblige the world with their lessons——"

"You think it would not be beneath me. Perhaps not. Nay, I

am sure not—only I don't do it; so, pray make no scruple about my time. Nothing could interest me, or indeed inspire me, so much as being allowed to guide a pencil like Miss Angela's. You will let me call again the day after to-morrow, will you not? Pray do."

"We shall, indeed, be most happy to see you, and very greatly obliged to you," said Margaret.

He staid nearly an hour after this, but it was then getting late, and it was positively time to return home.

So he bent down and kissed his little dog, who lay nestling on the pillow by Margaret—took the hand of both ladies, gently pressed them—went out by the garden door—turned—cast a glance once more round the room he was quitting, and was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

Much did she suffer; but if any friend
Beholding her condition, at the sight
Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
She stilled them
He who afflicts me knows what I can bear,
WORDSWORTH.

WHEN life is reduced to its simplest elements; when luxury is impossible, and pleasures few; when every day brings its pressing and imperious duties, to be rewarded every night by that recompense alone which attends upon their due performance—a conscience at peace and sweet repose; a very small additional source of enjoyment suffices to produce a very great increase of happiness.

Angela sat down by her stepmother and friend, when he was gone, a glow of hope and expectation upon her cheek, and in her eye a something of the spirit and gayety of temper which had lately literally been quenched in anxiety; while Margaret's countenance assumed a calm serenity: the weight which pressed so heavily upon the springs of life seemed for the moment removed from her chest. She breathed more freely, her very cough became less irritable. Such is the power of mental relief.

True, it was not much; he was but a young artist, accidentally thrown into communication with them. Poor, it would seem, as

themselves; dependent upon his talents for his subsistence. But ah! that "poor as themselves," what infinite comfort was in that thought!

And let it not be attributed to the base meanness of jealousy against those in better circumstances, or to the equally great meanness of a too susceptible pride, that this equality is so consoling to the heart. Wealth is so insolent—almost involuntarily so, perhaps; and the superiority merely founded upon wealth is one against which the human heart must, and ever will revolt, and feel it a degradation to submit.

These two things have always struck me as something remarkable in human nature: the almost irresistible propensity, even in the best and the wisest, to assume *something* upon their wealth; and the invariable revolt of the heart, even of the humblest and least tenacious, against it. These feelings, except in the rarest instances, give a something false and unsatisfactory to the relations, which abates considerably from the comfort and pleasure of communication under such circumstances; and, therefore, without the slightest imputation upon either of my two favorites, I must admit that the idea that Mr. Carteret was as poor as themselves added very much to the pleasure of that day's incident.

They had for the last eighteen months led such an utterly secluded life, that to meet a new face was a pleasure in itself; and his was *such* a face! So they sat talking over and discussing their new friend, and recapitulating the different events of this exciting morning, with an interest that reanimated them both.

"And then," remarked Margaret, "think of the immense value that a few good lessons in drawing may be to you, my Angela! for, my child and friend—my more than child, my more than friend," said she, taking her hand and pressing it tenderly, "I am grieved to be for ever clouding that clear brow with my sad anticipations of the future: but it is useless to delay the consideration of that which must and will shortly come. We must not be anxious about an unrevealed to-morrow, but we must prepare ourselves for that which we do see. My dear love, there can not be a doubt as to my true condition."

The eyes of Angela were again filled with that serious and mournful expression which rendered them so interesting.

"No," she said, "Margaret, I forgot myself in the pleasure of the moment; but I believe I know what is before me."

"Death," said Margaret, "seems such an awful, dreadful, overwhelming event to those high in health and youth like you, my child,

that you feel—I see it—a kind of horror in the contemplation of it, as associated with your poor friend; your whole nature is darkened over at the idea that your Margaret must actually *die*. But to me it is so different. Sickness and sorrow bring us to a very altered view of things. The world becomes to the sick—it has already become to me; but I hope it will be many, many years, before you can ever understand the feeling—the world has become a mere empty and unsubstantial vision. As far as I myself am concerned, I could almost pant for the moment of release; for that moment of blessed emancipation from this suffering body, and this clouded, languid mind; for the moment which, through the mercy above, opens to us the blessed light of that better world, and reunites us to those we have loved. You know who is gone there before me, my child; so do not grieve on my account. Nay, nay, no tears, my sweet girl;” and she wiped off those that fell upon her cheek.

“They are selfish tears,” said Angela.

“Now when I die,” continued Margaret, “my widow’s pension dies with me; and, except a few hundred pounds, you and these little children will be left utterly destitute.”

“Don’t afflict yourself about that, Margaret—your children are my children; and the Lord who hears the young ravens cry will provide for us. When I shed tears, it is because I must *lose* you: say what they will, it is a hard, hard matter, to live separated, entirely separated, by this terrible veil of death, from those we love. But I shall bear it as every body bears it; I have a stout young heart, as you well know. And don’t let anxiety about our livelihood disturb you; I feel strong, and of a great courage; we shall get on very well: it’s a difficult world, I dare say, but I shall manage to get along in it.”

“What do you propose to do, my love?”

“Give lessons, to be sure; that is the only thing a girl like me can do. I am no great proficient in any thing, but there must be thousands who know still less than me. I am sure, in what little I have happened to see of people, I have been only surprised to find how few there were who did any thing *very* well. Not all Mr. Carteret’s teaching will ever make me a first-rate artist, I know; any more than all your pains, dear Margaret, have made me a first-rate musician. But I shall be at the very head of my profession as a nursery governess; and in that line I intend to start.”

She spoke with a sort of energetic cheerfulness—she always did so when the conversation turned upon her own future plans and prospects. She was a brave, high-spirited girl; and the idea of a

contest with life, and of the necessity of getting her own living, was animating rather than depressing to her.

It was only through her heart and affections that Angela could be wounded; evils from any other source seemed to her as nothing in comparison. If Margaret had been in good health, she would have laughed at the ills of poverty; she would have toiled and sung, light of heart; enjoyed the white bread of life when it was to be had, and been quite merry and contented when there was only the brown. She was young and inexperienced, and she was little aware of all the struggles of poverty in a world such as ours, but she was not altogether mistaken in her self-reliance; she had that true spirit of independence and cheerfulness which is the best shield to oppose against these evils. There was only one form in which poverty at present put on its terrors—the dread of finding it impossible to furnish the means of providing the necessary comforts for her sick friend.

The pressing anxieties upon the subject of furnishing bread sufficient for the children had been already relieved.

Mrs. Whitwell had received her application for some sewing with great satisfaction; for she was evidently very much pleased to find this fine young lady, as she thought her, inclined to be useful and industrious.

“Yes, to be sure, Miss Nevil,” said she; “I can find plenty of sewing for you to do. The linen is just come home from the bleacher’s, and has to be made into sheets for the ploughboys and tablecloths for our house-place dinner; there are shirts, too, will soon be wanting for some of the lads. Never fear but I will find work—only maybe your dainty fingers may be above handling such coarse stuff.”

“Never mind my dainty fingers,” said Angela, but too happy at the prospect of finding employment. “I am only quite ashamed that I have let them be idle so long.”

The conversation between the stepmother and daughter thus proceeded:—

“I insured my life for a few hundreds,” Margaret said, “as soon as I got my pension: it has gone hard with us to save enough to pay the premium, you know, but we have managed it till now; and if we starve, my child, we must continue to do it. I shall die in comparative peace if I have but the conviction that you have at least a few hundreds to begin the world with when I am gone.”

Such were the prospects, such the best hopes, of these unfortunates!

Carteret had been greatly moved with what he had seen. He had, like most young men of his age, as yet learned little of what

composes the actual life of thousands of his fellow-creatures. He had been accustomed from his cradle to every species of comfort and luxury, and had never reflected how much those things might be out of the common course to others. In truth, he had dwelt so little in the actual, and so much in the ideal, that he was apt to pass over with little notice whatever was not forced upon his attention by some striking circumstance or other. He had never been called upon to witness any scene of great and real distress. Of sickness he was ignorant; and actual poverty was but a myth to him. Strange as it may seem, this was true. He had heard men call themselves very poor at college when they wanted a hundred pounds; he had also seen poor ragged children in the streets: but he had gone along, as too many do, never realizing these last things to his own heart.

Now he beheld painful sickness and approaching death displayed before his eyes, aggravated by the severe privations of great poverty; but even yet he little guessed how great was the poverty, how severe the privation, which, under these external demonstrations, actually existed.

As he walked home over the fields, unaccompanied by his little favorite, the pale and beautiful face of the dying Margaret, and the equally pale but earnest face of Angela, were incessantly before him; and as he recalled this last, with generous courage exposing her life for the defense of the children; and as he pictured to himself the dying sufferer rapidly approaching the grave, apparently forgetful of herself, and only intent upon the interests of those she must leave behind her; as he thought upon the mother, and the friend—the true mother and the true friend thus united, and under such circumstances—his heart swelled, and thoughts more grave and serious than had perhaps ever before occupied him began to fill his mind.

The difference in his and their fate—their great worth and his comparative extreme unworthiness—the abundance which surrounded him—young, healthy, vigorous, well able to contend with any difficulty, and struggle against any hardships—contrasted with the privations and the wants of that frail and feeble creature, with wasted transparent hands, and complexion faded by disease, with faltering voice and failing breath. And when he thought of her lying upon that hard couch, and of his cushions of down, a feeling of shame, almost of remorse, came over him.

Luxury he had ever despised; vanity and ostentation were strangers to his heart; but, like other young men of his age, he had carelessly lavished the money that passed through his hands, without asking

himself whether he could make the means he possessed of service to others, and with little reflection upon the account he must one day render for the talent intrusted to his keeping.

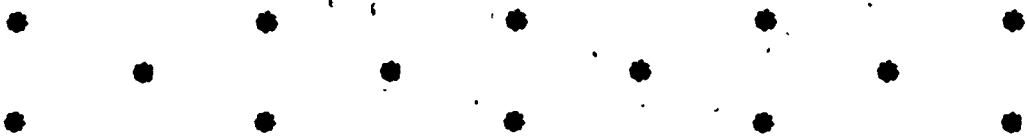
He did not even now consider the subject exactly in this light. His thoughts, little trained to this species of general retrospection, traveled not further than the present object; but he *did* think with something akin to remorse, or rather to disgust, I should say, perhaps, upon the comforts that awaited his return. In his present humor, I believe, he could have wished himself to have been, in fact, that which he had represented himself to be—a poor artist, not much better off than themselves.

Then vague dreams of benevolence succeeded, like the dreams of those who live, alas! in thought, and understand nothing of the persevering labor, the painful effort, required from all who would, indeed, do good; and he thought with pleasure that the day but one after that of this great adventure of his, he would be allowed to present himself again at the farmhouse.

He arrived at home, and again sat down to his elegant and luxurious little meal; but the viands were distasteful. He could not eat. He felt as if his dinner would have choked him; so he told the man who waited to take it all away, and began to walk up and down the room, still meditating upon the contrasts which struck upon him so painfully.

Assist them he must.

But how?



Carteret now standing, as it were, upon the threshold of a new field of action, had the first experience of that which presents itself to all really in earnest upon the subject, namely, the difficulty there often is in doing good.

As regards sufferers in their position of life, a difficulty almost insurmountable. Their ideas and feelings render it impossible to offer assistance in the ordinary manner; it must be done in the most hidden and delicate way. Such ways are not easy to find out.

Ah! how many of these there are who, hidden from every eye, in their obscurity and privation, suffer more than the very pauper who takes refuge in the workhouse! for them there is no refuge, and they sink, after a series of privations, mental and bodily, not easy to describe.

What we usually call the poor man, the man born to labor with his hands, belongs at least to a cordial, hearty, and merry society. His perceptions, never over-refined by habits of delicacy and elegance, his nerves unrelaxed by the effects of mental excitement, surrounded by friends and acquaintance—in the society of his fellows (a rich consolation this, almost denied to the poor among the more educated classes), life is to him, even at the worst, a source of continual excitement, and often of amusement. The simple life of nature is the compensation for his lot, with all its cheerful joys, and free at least from morbid sorrows.

The Father of all has not forgotten His laboring children, but has afforded them, of His good blessings, their share.

But the poor of the class I am now speaking of are deprived of such alleviations. Hard labor, which sends the frame accustomed to it, to enjoy the elysium of unbroken slumber, though perhaps in a sordid bed, there leaves *them* oppressed with toil—faint, fevered with unusual exertion, weary, exhausted, nervous—to seek the hard couch of poverty, when upon a bed of down scarcely would they have found rest.

A sense of humiliation, which it requires almost heroic constancy to overcome, robs society of all its pleasant charms; if, indeed, they do not find themselves actually banished from those circles where once they were admired and honored. Then the difficulty of getting employment! Sad, when the day-laborer wants it! Mournful, pitiable state for *him* when it occurs! though the difficulty is more easily conquered. But, in the case of those more finely nurtured, women, more especially, poor wandering stars! fallen from their sphere, it often proves nearly invincible.

I will not enlarge upon this subject: I leave it to the suggestions of your own kind hearts. I will go on to tell you what my young man was thinking and doing.

How should he help them?

Money it was impossible to offer—that was totally out of the question.

Any thing that would appear like money's-worth—almost equally so.

There was a brace of trout brought up for his dinner, and some hot-house strawberries and peaches appeared for his dessert.

That was the thing.

“Oh!” thought he, “that all these delicacies, reared with so much cost and labor for those in health, could only find their way to the sick! Ah! blessed were luxury, if such its destination!”

He was most impatient for the hour when he might, at least, carry such little trifling comforts to his new friends.

I do not very well know how he passed the whole of the next day.

Wandering about the woods and gardens, I believe, too much pre-occupied, and too listless, to take one of his long walks. He looked up his drawing materials, however, and selected some sketches by those who had taught him, and a book or two upon the subject of art, which he thought might prove useful.

His thoughts and his time were entirely filled with one object.

He felt no shyness at the idea of presenting such little offerings. The charge he had persuaded them to undertake of his little dog would furnish him, he thought, with an excuse for bringing a little basket with him.

He was in the habit, as you know, of walking about at home with the most slovenly disregard to his dress. Of dress, indeed, he never troubled himself to think—he left all that care to his valet; who, like too many other valets and servants in such circumstances, took advantage of his confidence and want of care, and made a very dishonest fortune out of his master's easiness, much to the injury of his own soul, and to the danger of that of every one who happened to be intimately acquainted with him.

But now it was almost laughable to see the hesitation he was in, as to what he should put on, when nothing would have been easier than to choose; as, in fact, no difference really existed between the costume of a young nobleman and that of an artist; but he was so afraid of being found out, that he thought he could not go too shabby; and so afraid of not appearing to advantage, that he could not be too nice.

At last he settled this important affair to his satisfaction; and then he began to pack his little basket, which he would not suffer to be done by any but his own hands.

He seemed to have such pleasure in performing any of those little offices which seemed to bring him into the sphere occupied by his two friends; and, moreover, he took extreme delight in doing any thing for them himself.

The eventful morning has arrived, and there he is, very busy.

He has a basket upon the table of his sitting-room—indifferent as to the spoiling of a rich carpet of striped velvet with which it is covered—and he has a dish of fine trout by the side of his little basket, and a quantity of green damp grass lying about. Another china dish is full of peaches and nectarines; and a plate of very fine strawber-

ries is there, too; and he is busy arranging all his things, so that one basket shall contain every thing. There is, likewise, I forgot to say, an immense bouquet of hot-house flowers before him.

A young man, with all these pretty things about him, packing a basket for his mistress, would not have made an ugly picture, I assure you. And he looked so busy and so happy—so like a child!

One does so love, sometimes, to see a young man look like a child!

He takes up the beautiful, silvery, crimson-spotted fish, and admires them; and looks round upon the rich fruit and flowers scattered in profusion around him with much satisfaction. He is an artist as well as a lover, and can not help being delighted with the beauty of this inartificial collection of forms and colors.

He has, moreover, so much pleasure in associating the beautiful with Margaret and Angela.

Now he lays the trout at the bottom of his basket, and covers them with abundance of his nice cool green grass. Then he places a layer of peaches and nectarines, most carefully, every one wrapped in vine-leaves. A small basket, placed in the center, contains his strawberries—much more precious in his eyes than all the rest.

Then he covers the whole over with more leaves, and lays his beautiful bouquet of flowers at the top.

He was quite alone while he was doing all this.

Now he walks round the table, and looks at his basket. Now he lifts up the flowers and leaves, and takes a peep at the rich blushing fruit; and gives a touch here, or secures a peach better there.

At last he is quite satisfied.

He puts on his hat, gives himself a glance in the glass, and arranges his hair a little. Doesn't think he looks very bad! Then he takes up his basket, and walks out through the window.

Quite assured, foolish fellow! that he will be observed by no one, and little aware of all the servant-hall prattle, to which his proceedings would give rise.

He walks cheerfully away, over fields and over stiles: the sun is very hot—but little cares he, for the grass is greener, and the sky more blue, and the kingcups and clover more dazzling and more sweet than he ever saw them before.

All nature is in her holiday dress that day for him.

CHAPTER X.

Mine be a cot beside a hill,
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe mine ear,
A willowy brook that turns a mill,
With many a fall, shall linger near.

ROGERS.

HE looked in at the garden gate.

Nero happened not to be upon guard at the moment, so he opened it, and, letting himself in, walked up the middle walk, turned the corner of the house, entered the orchard, and there he found them as before.

Only that Angela was not reading, but was engaged in needle-work, and Margaret had a book open, which, upon his approach, she laid down, and looking up, saluted him cheerfully; while Angela rose, looked a little shy, colored, but accepted his offered hand.

He was looking charmingly, it must be confessed; his walk over the hills, his satisfaction in the employment of the morning, his hope of giving pleasure by his little present, had animated him. What was at times wanting to make his appearance perfectly agreeable was now there in perfection. He had lost that listless air, that almost slouching gait, which expressed too much indolence and indifference to things in general; and the courtly softness of his demeanor, and politeness of his manners, were still more observable now than they had been before.

"How are you to-day?" said he, approaching Margaret and Angela.

"Thank you very much for your inquiries, much the same to-day," said she. She spoke very languidly. He thought she looked paler than before.

"And you—you have suffered no ill consequence from the fright of last Thursday, I hope?"

"None in the least, thank you;" offering her chair, and taking her place at Margaret's feet upon the sofa.

He thought Angela looked more grave and sad than she had done the last time.

He took her chair thus offered, and, sitting down by her, put his basket upon the table.

"Your little dog is doing nicely," began Angela, lifting up a shawl,

and displaying the little creature nestling by Margaret's side; who, upon this, raised his head, and saluted his master with a whine of joy. The poor little creature would have sprung up to receive him, but Margaret laid her thin, fair hand upon him; he obeyed the gentle pressure, and was quiet.

"Poor little Rover! poor little fellow!" and so on.

A few minutes' attention, in such circumstances, every young man will, and would, give to his dog. Let no young woman be jealous of that.

He soon sat down again, and began:

"The weather is so hot, that I have taken the liberty of bringing you a little fruit, which I have procured," addressing Margaret; "and for you, Miss Angela, a few flowers."

"Fruit!" exclaimed the wasted and thirsty invalid, her eyes almost sparkling with a feverish pleasure.

"Fruit!" cried Angela, her countenance beaming with gratitude and delight. "Fruit! and at this time of the year! Oh! thank you, thank you, a thousand, thousand times."

"There are a few strawberries, and two or three peaches," said he, beginning to open his basket, and putting the nosegay upon Angela's lap, who bent her head over it, and hid her face a moment among the flowers.

I believe she kissed them.

He took out the little basket of strawberries, and handed them to Margaret.

I believe he never in his life afterward forgot that moment; the look of pleasure with which she applied them to her parched lips, the exquisite gratification which this little treat, this little alleviation of her sufferings, seemed to afford her.

It was a lesson to him which he remembered; and from henceforward he knew better how to dispense his superfluities.

"If we had a plate," said he, replacing the little strawberry-basket upon the table when she was satisfied, "I would take out the peaches; there are a brace of trout below the leaves. I thought, perhaps, you might be able to fancy them; they are quite fresh, and are, I believe, reckoned particularly well flavored in that stream of my *father's*. . . ."

—He had quite forgotten himself; but they were so absorbed, partly in pleasure at the receipt of these most acceptable gifts, and partly by that confusion which makes delicate minds awkward and embarrassed at receiving presents from those upon whom they have no claim, that they did not observe his blunder.—

. . . In this county," correcting himself, "that I venture upon bringing them."

"You are too good," said Margaret.

"You are *very* good," said Angela.

She was, indeed, deeply grateful.

She fetched a plate; and as the beautiful peaches, with their blushing, crimson cheeks, were piled upon it, one after the other, had any one bestowed the mines of Peru upon her, she could hardly have felt more joy.

Such a relief!

That very morning she had been so sadly meditating again upon the impossibility of providing any thing which could gratify the diseased appetite of her poor friend, who was evidently suffering extremely from the exhaustion produced by want of nourishment, and yet could, as the phrase is, fancy nothing.

And to see this treasure, as it appeared to her, of delicious fruit!

"How good! how *very* good you are! Dear Margaret, will you have one of these peaches?"

"By and by, my dear," sinking back. "No more now, thank you;" and she closed her eyes.

"I think she will sleep for a few minutes," whispered Angela.

"Shall we carry these things, then into the house?" said he, in the same tone.

Delighted with the little confidence expressed by a whisper, and by that *we*, so pleasing to the ear of lovers.

They carried the basket and the fruit into the house.

And never did good old Izaak look with such delight upon a brace of fine trout of his own catching, as did the young girl upon these beautiful fish, as he produced them.

She did not thank him any more, but she looked at him with such grateful, affectionate eyes, that he could hardly forbear stooping down and kissing the hand which rested upon the basket.

"We will have them dressed for her dinner at one o'clock, when we always dine; and I hope you will do us the pleasure to stay and taste them."

She was quite delighted to be able to invite him, and to exercise a little hospitality. She never dreamed of the impropriety of asking him herself, as some young ladies might have done; but she was the most artless, straightforward creature in the world.

"Nothing I could possibly like so much," said he; "thank you, it will come in charmingly after our drawing lesson; for you know," he added, with a smile, which she thought excessively attractive,

“that I am to give you a few hints in that way, such as I can; and I have brought some pencils and paper in my pocket, and a few little things which I thought might be of use,” pulling a pretty considerable roll of paper and other matters out of his pocket. “If we put this table by the window, you can work and watch your friend at the same time. I see she seems still asleep.”

“Perhaps you will be so very kind as just to stand and watch her, while I run to Nurse and give her the fish. Sometimes she wakes with such a violent cough, that she requires immediate assistance. We never leave her alone. Please ring the bell, if she wakes before I come back.”

And away she went, light and almost as gay as a bird.

He liked her sad—he liked her heroic—he liked her in this sweet, easy, and every-day humor, as he thought, better than any way.

There is something certainly very engaging in life reduced to this perfectly simple form, without parade or ceremony; but then it must be so contrived—as it assuredly may—as to partake of the ideal.

Then the shady garden, the great trees, the old house, the simple elegance of their appearance and manners, united to render the enchantment complete.

I assure those who think the charm of simplicity consists in the absence of a certain elegance, refinement, and politeness, that they will find themselves very greatly mistaken; and when they have substituted mere indifference and neglect for attention and exertion about such little matters, will, perhaps, discover that their idea of life is both mistaken and disagreeable.

People are sometimes very proud of this sort of negligent indolence, and seem to think it very fine, and that contempt for such things argues considerable greatness of mind. I beg to assure them it is a sort of greatness of mind which nothing but great circumstances and great characters can render at all valuable, and that little people, encompassed with little things, do not do at all amiss to study neatness and the graces.

Little households are thus rendered amiable, and hours are passed in delightful harmony, which slovenliness and indolence render almost intolerable.

In conclusion, my dear female friends, I beg of you not to think yourselves clever women, far less good Christian women, because you are awkward, slatternly, and untidy.

These little remarks by the way, the Old Man, you know, insists upon having tolerated.

There is a great improvement in these things ; but a little attention may be wanted still ; and what's the use of writing novels for you, if your little faults are not to be observed upon in them ?

You see how it was in this case. Who knows but the fair Angela may get a lord for her husband, merely because she exerted herself, and took a pleasure in producing as much comfort, and beauty, and delicacy, and good order, as possible, with her narrow means ?

I do not say that such success did reward her good behavior ; but I affirm she would not have had the slightest chance in the world if she had been of a different temper.

And it's no use at all railing at young men ; they will like nice, handy, clever, neatly dressed young women, who know how to appear pleasing in every situation.

You may be sure our friend, as he stood at the window, looking at the swallows as they gracefully sailed before him in their airy chase, or followed with his eye a gaudy peacock-butterfly, fluttering from peony to narcissus, and from the narcissus to the gillyflowers, with which the little border beneath his feet was filled, made none of the homely reflections I have been making ; but he felt the charm of these domestic virtues, though far too ignorant of the ways of men to be in the least aware of the numberless good qualities that must be called into action to produce the air of peace and gracious order which he saw around him.

If he had thought at all upon the subject, he would have imagined, I believe, that all this was according to the common every-day course of things ; and I heartily wish it were.

He was in a pleasant reverie.

The form of Angela flitted before him, as did the scene before his eyes, though in the vision things were a good deal altered. He saw that which certainly was not actually present.

They could not be called plans—they were not in the least like plans. Dreams—most like—idle dreams all.

Now she comes into the room again, looking very animated and happy.

She had arranged her little dinner.

There was to be fish and potatoes. Mrs. Whitwell had given her a small cream-cheese, as she was to have company ; and there was bread and butter, and some eggs and bacon.

It was the first little feast she had seen upon her table for a very long time ; and, having arranged it with much alacrity, she now came in, with a neat white apron on, and her cuffs over her sleeves, to take her drawing-lesson.

Having first assured herself that Margaret still slept, they were soon busy together, placing the table in a proper light; then he unrolled his paper, and produced his copies and his studies, placed his little portable box of water-colors by his side, and they were soon at work.

Oh, charm of domestic art!—Muse of the modern world—more lovely than any sister of the nine before the precious domestic life was known!

Gentle, modest, benign Genius!—with eyes in which the sacred fire shines with a holy, tempered lustre—subdued in sweet humility, to take the second part—to follow in the steps of the majestic Duty—to wait in gentle humility till all her tasks are performed, and then to carefully collect the scraps and crumbs of time, and transform them into fairest flowers to deck her path.

Oh, charm of domestic art!—what hours and hours once spent in tiresome conflict with, or amid all the horrors of that fiend *ennui*—or worse, far worse, amid the excitements of vicious pleasure—have, under thy sweet influence, become industrious, innocent, and happy! What sweet communion has passed with pencil in hand, or over the ivory keys! What refinement, what harmony, what cheerfulness, have been thy gift!

Ever, sweet goddess, keep thy place, ever follow in hasty attendance upon the footsteps of thy sister Duty; and so may the blessing of God and man descend upon thy innocent head, and hallow thy pleasant labors!

No, it is not possible to be happier than they two were.

Absorbed in the employment which interested them both so much, and with that soft, mystical influence of dawning love surrounding them, which sweetens every circumstance.

They were together, sitting side by side, working away: he, teaching her so judiciously; she, astonishing him by her facility—a facility, it must be confessed, which surpassed, by many degrees, what she had ever shown before.

It is so cheering for the man to guide and instruct the woman—so delightful for the woman to be guided and instructed by the man.

“Now, I think it would be better if I were to begin from the first steps, and show you the manner in which my master used to carry on his operations; and then you will be initiated into the true mysteries of the art, and after that we shall get along excellently well, you will see,” he had said.

And she was now standing over him, with one hand upon the back of his chair, watching, as castle and tree, and distant woods and

groves, and mountains, lake, or waterfall, grew up beneath his creative pencil, and were displayed under the glow of a bright setting sun.

It really was a beautiful little picture that he produced in an incredibly short space of time; and when he had done, he threw down his pencil and said—

“Now copy it, if you think it good enough. Sit down, and begin and try.”

So she sat down; and it was then his turn to stand over her, his hand upon the back of her chair, and to lean down and direct her endeavors.

He was quite rewarded when she turned up her face to ask him a question, and her pleasant eyes were fixed with such artless confidence upon his.

And all this time Margaret was asleep?

No such thing.

But she could from her couch see what was going on at the window. It was very plain that Angela had quite forgotten her. Did she think it very unkind and thoughtless of Angela?

She would not have been recalled to her recollection—she would not have interrupted her—for any consideration.

Nurse, however, was less scrupulous.

She came in to say that dinner was ready; and where was it to be set, “with all them things upon the table?”

“Oh, we must have the dinner in the garden, to be sure!”

“And who’s to carry the big table there, pray? for Biddy can’t help you, I can tell you. Those children keep up such a fashious noise to-day, I can’t think what in the world’s the matter with ’em; and as for Tommy, he’s got to the tea-kettle, and been playing at cleaning it, and he’s as black as a tinker. I never saw such plagues of children in all my days! But where will you have the table, I say?”

“In the garden, to be sure. Margaret!—oh, she’s awake!”

“Margaret!” running to her, “your dinner is ready. Will you not like to have it there under the walnut-tree? I have asked Mr. Carteret—I could not help it—I could hardly help it, you know”—in a whisper—“and he accepted immediately; but it has made Nurse dreadfully cross.”

“Why, my dear, Nurse is rather put out, as we can not have things decently tidy, as she thinks; but I quite agree with you in thinking it right to ask him, and I should like to dine with you very much, if it would not be too much trouble: let us have dinner set, as usual, upon my little table.”

"Oh, you have no conception what a grand entertainment it is to be! We must have the big table; but I shall make our young gentleman help to carry it, I can tell you."

"Margaret would like to dine with us, she says; so we will set the table close by her couch. We all wait upon ourselves here, you must know. I have no good godmother to turn pumpkins into footmen for me. I am sure you will be so good as to help me to carry the table."

He was ready enough to be so good, you may be sure.

And he soon found himself as busy as she was, laying the cloth, and arranging the plates, knives, and forks.

There is some other being, besides old fairy godmothers, who can transform things, and produce footmen, as occasion requires, it would seem.

Nurse soon appeared with her dish of fish, done to a nicety, her potatoes, and other delicacies, and the three began to eat.

It would be difficult to say which of them both helped Margaret with the tenderer attention; when she was satisfied, another plate was hastily filled, and away with it flew Angela.

"There, my little darlings!" as she entered the large, somewhat gloomy old room, which was nursery, and play-room, and school-room, in one—"there is company here to-day, and gentlemen don't like to eat with little children, you know, so you must dine up here; but I haven't forgotten you. Nice hot potatoes and fish! Here, Tommy, fetch your cup and plate: make yourself useful, my man; set another for Lucy. Oh, thou dirty little Tom! is that a face to come to dinner with? There, Lucy, sit down by your brother—there is some fish—wait till I have picked out all the bones. Baby!—yes, baby shall have some! Don't cry, baby! Come to its own Angela!"

She was really very good-natured, for she was so longing to fly back again. She felt as if the moments were so inestimable that day, and there seemed a sort of invincible attraction to the place where he sat.

Certainly I must own that she did hurry through her duties as fast as she could; then she kissed the children round, told them she would bring them some cream-cheese when it came, and away she flew again.

"My bird! my love!" said Margaret fondly, as she returned, "you will be quite out of breath. Yes—yes, you have been feeding my little ones, poor things!"

She did not say, but she thought Angela looked more like an angel,

at that moment, than a human being, with her radiant face, her flowing hair, and her light and animated figure.

"Now, my love, sit down; Mr. Carteret would not eat till you came."

"I am so sorry to have kept you waiting."

And again they were side by side.

He thought he had never tasted any thing so exquisite in his life as the fare that day. To be sure he *was* very hungry, for he had eaten little since they had parted the day but one before.

"We have no wine, I am sorry to say," said Angela, as she helped him to a glass of water; "but if you like beer, I am sure Mrs. Whitwell will give you some."

"Oh, no! I want nothing in the world but what I have."

And this was perfectly true.

He took note of every thing.

This little feast, as it evidently was—the sort of bustle which so small a matter seemed to occasion—gave him a better insight than he had before into the narrow circumstances in which his friends were placed.

To help these sufferers under sickness and poverty he felt to be a duty as imperious as it was delightful. But then, again, how to set about it?

Once in a way these things might be done; but could he often repeat his presents?

As he walked home he kept pondering upon what he would do.

At last he came to his resolution.

He would confess his difficulties to Angela, with frankness, which he felt would not be by her misunderstood.

CHAPTER XI.

..... The breathing wind,
Which through the trembling leaves full gently playes.

SPENSER.

THE two friends sat looking at each other as Carteret, having taken leave, disappeared behind the trees.

They were silent some time.

Margaret spoke first.

"It would please you, my sweetest Angela, if you could know how much better I feel for this little treat. It is so long since I have tasted any thing I really enjoyed; and now, if I had but half a glass of wine I should so like it."

"Then you shall have it, be sure, my dear Margaret. But if it should do you harm? in such complaints as yours I fear—"

"Fear nothing, my love. In such complaints as mine, had I all the first physicians in the world, I know what their sentence must be—I must die. We have no physician—we could not afford the expense of one, so far as it would be for him to come; and the little village doctor is worse than useless, we have agreed. I must therefore follow Nature, and Nature at this moment begs and prays for a little wine. Get me some, dear Angela, for pity's sake."

The poor invalid said this with that asking eye of hungry desire, that irresistible urgency, with which the sick in some cases entreat indulgence for a craving.

"I feel that it would almost call me back to life," she said.

"You shall have it, Margaret. I can and will get you some."

She left the garden, and hastened to Nurse.

"Nurse, your mistress longs for a glass of wine, and we must get it for her. Will you go yourself down to the little public-house, and buy us a bottle? I have money enough—five shillings—I believe that will be enough."

"It is almost my last," thought she, as she nearly emptied her little purse; "but I will sit up half the night to finish the work I have got to do, and then the little widow's cruise will be replenished once more."

"Wine!" said Nurse, crossly; "I never heard of such nonsense

in my life! Wine in a consumption! who ever on earth heard of such a thing?"

"I am sure I don't know; but Margaret is longing for it, and she must have it."

"But she mustn't, I tell you! Law, if I haven't seen hundreds and hundreds die of consumptions, and never saw a glass of wine allowed to any one of them in all my life! It seems as if you thought one had no experience, Miss Angela, to go on as you do: talking of giving wine, and in a consumption! But if you want it you may get it yourself—I'll never lend *my* hand to such a thing!"

"Nay, Nurse, but you know how disagreeable it would be to me to go to a public-house and ask for a bottle of wine, and Biddy is out with the children, and Margaret wants it now—she asked for it with such longing eyes. Do, dear, good Nurse, for this once! Pray, pray don't be obstinate—pray don't!"

"Obstinate! and pray! pray! No I won't, I tell you! Haven't I seen it over and over again? longing eyes for sure! Ay, ay, many and many have I seen with longing, begging, beseeching eyes, praying for that which was poison for them, or worse; but I never saw a doctor in my life, who was worth any thing, that would yield to such nonsense. As if *that* was likely to do good, just what their sick fancies are a wandering after!"

"But, Nurse, I have often heard Margaret say that yours is the old-fashioned way of considering these things; and I have heard her say there was great cruelty in the old plan, and that the good sense and humanity of modern days had exploded it. And I am sure, while my dear papa was so ill, and she nursing him so tenderly, she never would deny him any thing he very much wished for."

"And he died, didn't he?" said the ill-tempered old woman. "Yes, I know your stepmother would have her own way in these things—she's just as obstinate and conceited in her way as you are, Miss Angela. Much she heeded any thing I could say; and see how it was. I told her what might come of her a-hanging, and a-hanging over him, and would do every thing for him herself; but she didn't mind me then, and see what is come of it. But you *shall* mind me now, for I wouldn't get a drop of wine for all the world—so you must do without it."

Angela's path in life was beset with many thorns, and cumbered with many obstructions. It was like the usual average of human conditions in this respect, and had its own great and peculiar difficulties besides.

Her youth and inexperience was a great one—her spirits were uncertain, her temper warm, her feelings susceptible, her confidence in herself unequal, now amounting to daring, now sinking below timidity. To master herself—to discipline her own heart and temper in preparation for the tasks her generous heart undertook, was one great difficulty. Another, was the having to deal with the unmanageable and unreasonable temper of the old woman, who played so conspicuous a part in the little household.

But, then, be it remarked, upon the other hand, what support she received from the gentleness and consideration for others, and the strong sense of Margaret, and how much her task was lightened by the heroic self-government and exemplary patience of her invalid.

Heroic self-government, I call it. Those who are blessed with health can never know, till they in their turn are called upon to suffer, what heroic strength of spirit lies hidden under the mask of silent, uncomplaining suffering—how strong the temptations are to be unreasonable, pettish, or repining—how difficult it is to be grateful, and still more to be amiable, when the irritation of every nerve renders the most skillful attendance irksome, and the dearest presence importunate—when the diseased frame loathes the sunshine of a smile, and dreads the tear and the cloud—where all is pain, and weariness, and bitterness.

Oh! let the healthy lay these things ever to heart, and, while they scrupulously perform their duty, and while they reverence, and almost adore, the fortitude and patience of the gentle and resigned, let them have pity upon many a poor and querulous sufferer; upon their side let the sick not forget that the reverence, adoration, and love thus excited, are as the elixir of life to their often wearied and overtaxed nurses; quickening them to exertion by the sweetest of influences, instead of exhausting them with the struggle to perform an ungrateful duty.

To return from this long digression: for the patient Margaret is lying there longing for the wine.

And Angela's temper is getting provoked.

But she masters it.

She knew well it was vain to remonstrate with Nurse—she would lose no time in attempting it.

Two plans presented themselves: should she go at once to the public house and buy a bottle of wine, or should she venture to ask Mrs. Whitwell to give her some?

Both were almost equally disagreeable; Mrs. Whitwell was a person she always disliked to confront, but it was the readiest way;

she should get the wine sooner, and it was but one glass that she wanted.

She decided upon this proceeding.

"Very well, Nurse," she said; "I know it is in vain to argue the matter with you."

And she turned and went away.

She passed hastily through the long passages which led to the other end of the house, her heart beating with that hurried, disagreeable feeling, which unnerves so many women, or, rather, which the being unnerved occasions; but she had the true courage which should adorn her sex—she defied her own weak and failing nerves—she could and would do what was most disagreeable, wherever love or duty required it.

To do what is disagreeable is almost the highest courage that we are called upon to exercise in the course of this easy Sybarite life of ours.

She opened the door which led into the house-place, and there stood Mrs. Whitwell, directing, or, rather, scolding, her maids; cheese making, and, in addition, bread making, and pork pickling, were going on.

This was a most inauspicious moment.

"Mrs. Whitwell, might I speak to you for an instant?"

"Oh, it's you, Miss Angela, is it? Yes, yes, stop a minute; I'll speak to you by and by."

"It's only one minute, Mrs. Whitwell; I have a great favor to beg of you."

"Favor! oh, ay, we're coming to that at last," thought Mrs. Whitwell. "I supposed we should not go on so swimmingly long—paying our rent to a day. Beg a delay!—well, well, I wish—" And, grumbling to herself, she took off her working apron, and motioned Angela into her parlor.

"I suppose I know well enough what you come to ask," said she, in no very amiable tone of voice; "and it can't be helped. To be sure, if you can't pay it, you can't; but it's really too bad to let one's house—"

"If you mean the rent, Mrs. Whitwell, it will be ready for you to-morrow. No, no, I only come to beg, as a matter of charity, one glass of wine for my mother; for we do not possess such a thing, and she wishes so much for it."

"Wine!" said Mrs. Whitwell, going to her corner-cupboard; "that seems an odd thing to be wishing for: but if that's what you want, here's a glass, and welcome. White or red, miss?"

"White, if you please,—I am so very much obliged to you."

"Oh, say no more about it; for once in a way, you are quite welcome."

For once in a way! The tone and manner made it quite intelligible: *for once*, but beware of trying a second time.

She was happy with what she had got, however; and again repeating her thanks, she flew to administer the cordial to her friend. With much caution, mixed with a little hot water and sugar, it was given; and Margaret thanked her, and said, "This has done me good!"

And so it had: she looked revived and strengthened.

"I think," she said, "I could walk a little, Angela;" and, resting on her arm, she took two or three turns upon the grass.

The sun glistened through the leaves of the trees—a light breeze whispered among the branches—busy insects hummed beneath—and birds flitted by, from time to time.

It was very peaceful.

The two walked in silence. Margaret would have found the exertion of speaking, while she moved about, too much for her, and Angela was pondering upon new anxieties.

She was better—Margaret was certainly better. A little delicate food, and a glass of that wine, which thousands and thousands were at that moment lavishing in the most careless, not to say vicious manner, had relieved that dreadful sensation of sinking and faintness, from which she had lately suffered so much. In spite of all Nurse could say,—in spite of all the dire prognostics which wait upon that fatal name, consumption, Angela felt persuaded that, could she but find the means to persevere in this system, the precious life of Margaret might yet be saved—prolonged, at least; and even to prolong it, under the frightful circumstances of her children, was a blessing unspeakable, and, to herself, every thing.

But how, alas! were these things to be obtained?

Where should she find the means to purchase these little luxuries, who could hardly, with all her exertions, provide bread?

Her new friend!

Her only friend!

It was plain she had no other in the world. Mrs. Whitwell wanted even common tenderness; it would be in vain, she knew well, to apply to her again. Her new friend—this young artist—would he help her? Could she, in return for the pictures she *might* in future paint—could she ask him to assist her? What a thing to do,—and he so young a man, too,—impossible! And yet to let her

Margaret perish—die of want—for to perish of want it seemed—her heart was torn at the thought, and bitter, bitter tears, heart-tears, were shed, though the eye looked dry and calm.

Would he, perhaps, in his good nature, bring another little supply the next day he came?—Probably he might.

With this hope she strove to content herself for the present; but with what impatience she waited for the morning! And, after all, would he come, or would he not come?

Poor Angela—she might have spared herself that anxiety, at least—he was certain to come.

She saw him enter the orchard.

Had he a basket?—oh, yes, that he had!

She was too young and simple to disguise her feelings—her eyes sparkled with delight; he thought the stars of heaven, in their brightness, less beautiful.

Margaret was not yet come down, so Angela was alone when he came in; he was very much earlier this morning than he had been the day before.

He sat down by the table, set his basket upon it, and began to stammer out,—

“That—that as the trout of yesterday had seemed to give her friend an appetite, he had ventured to try something else—a couple of spring chickens—a few heads of asparagus—a little more fruit. Would she think it was taking too great a liberty?—He had kind friends who supplied him plentifully with little matters of this sort—he did not want them—did not know what to do with them—they were quite wasted upon him; and—and”—

He need not have blundered on so long.

She stood looking at him with her clear truthful eyes, and said,—

“Oh, you can not guess how very, very acceptable such kindness is to me.”

“Is it?” he said; “then let me speak out—I long to speak out to you. Something in you tells me that all those idle difficulties with which people hamper and embarrass themselves through life, are quite needless with one of so simple and noble a disposition as yours. Why should I pretend not to see what you know I must see? And why should I not at once say what I want to say? Tell me what you want for her, and let me get it for you. What I have of my own you will accept as frankly as I, with extreme pleasure, offer it; what I have not, you will let me procure for you. Nay, nay,” he added, to spare her feelings of pride and delicacy, “let there be no

difficulty made; I will keep an exact account against you, and you shall pay me when you have sold some pictures—or—or"—with a sweet, half conscious smile, "any thing else puts it into your power."

Her life—Margaret's life—was in question.

Angela had cast her eyes down at first, but, as he went on, she raised them up, and looked at him with a confidence which was really and indeed beautiful.

"I accept your offer, Mr. Carteret," she said; "the life—the precious life—of a mother to three young children may be saved. Nurse says I am mistaken—I may be, but I do not think I am. I believe that nourishment such as you offer to provide might save her yet. And oh! Mr. Carteret, conceive the horrid, horrid thought—" her eyes filling fast with tears—"to feel this, and think it impossible to get what I wanted! To see a friend—the best and noblest creature upon earth—fading away for want of a few comforts which every body in the world but herself seems to enjoy! It was too, too dreadful!"

"Too dreadful, indeed!" said he, with much pity. "And are there many," thought he to himself, "in such a situation? many widows and children of brave officers thus stranded, thus abandoned by their country to suffering and privations like these?"

He might have added, "And of poor clergymen, too."

But the cant—shall I call it the wicked cant?—of the present day, might have answered there. "But what right have clergymen to have wives and children?"

And the cant, the wicked cant, of the present day, might perhaps, too, have answered as unfeelingly with respect to those who follow the once honored profession of arms.

He had opened his basket as before, and, as before, the flowers, the fresh fruit, and other things, were spread upon plates upon the table. Angela looked, in hopes that a bottle of wine might possibly appear with the rest.

She looked in vain—there was no wine.

Then she took courage, and, coming a little nearer to him, said, coloring high—oh, what an effort it cost her to say it!—

"Yesterday, Margaret asked for wine, and I had none to give her."

"How stupid of me not to think of that!" said he.

"Does she want wine?" taking his hat, and rising; "I will get her some directly."

"I thought to ask you to do me that favor," taking out her little purse, and handing it to him. "I believe wine is to be bought at the Rose and Crown, the little inn in the village; but Nurse would not fetch it for me, and I was so foolish, I did so dislike to go myself."

"Oh, don't think of it; the wine at such places is wretched poisonous stuff. Let me get you some good. Such wine as that would do her more harm than good; in an hour and a half, or so, I will be back again, and she shall have some very good wine. What sort will she like best? Rhine wine, burgundy, champaign, claret wines, madeira, sherry,—which?"

He seemed to possess Fortunatus's wishing-cap.

But her curiosity was less awakened by this dazzling list of wines than it would have been if she had been a little less ignorant upon the subject.

"Oh, I only know the names of sherry, madeira, marsalla, and port; any white wine will do. Marsalla is what we used to have; I suppose that is the right thing. Here," again offering her purse, "I would rather pay for it, if you please, at once."

He took the little purse, put his fingers in, drew out half-a-crown—

"This will be enough," said he.

And off he went.

CHAPTER XII.

To love thee is to be tender, happy, pure.

'Tis from low passions to escape,

And woo bright Virtue's fairest shape.

THOMSON.

How soon people, in such circumstances, become acquainted! There was nothing to prevent these two young hearts running together. He was so enthusiastic and romantic, and she so simple, and so filled with that charity which thinketh no evil; and there was no jarring feeling upon either side to prevent it.

They sat day after day at their drawing, side by side; together they carried out the table and arranged the midday-meal under the shade of the walnut-trees; together they tended the invalid; together they played with the children.

He had been one who disliked children before, but he learned to love these.

His visits were daily. At first they lasted only a few hours: these hours became more and more numerous: at last he did not go away till the evening.

Margaret watched what was going on with attention. At first her pride had been a little alarmed at the idea of Angela, the daughter of a brave officer, forming an alliance with a young unknown artist; but when she had observed him well, and marked the gentleness and delicacy of his feelings, the refinement of his manners, and the excellence of his education, as displayed by his conversation—his mind so full of ideas and so highly cultivated, and his principles of rectitude so upright and so strong—as all these good qualities, in the course of their daily intimacy, were unfolded with a simplicity not to be mistaken—she began to take herself seriously to task for these scruples of her pride, and to ask herself for what reason on earth she should desire to prevent Angela finding her happiness in the station which, as the wife of a young artist, she must occupy. One sigh to the memory of the father, once so proud and glorying in his beautiful child, and then she dismissed such thoughts as out of place, and wrong, teaching herself to regard with complacency a prospect which long prejudice could not but lead her to consider as a species of degradation.

The cultivation of art is certainly regarded in this island (I can not at all think why), with much less respect than it meets with among our neighbors on the other side of the water.

As for Angela, the case was soon a clear one.

It was not possible that she should see so much of so very engaging a man—enter into such familiar intercourse—share with him in the details of domestic life—find in him help, strength, sympathy, guidance—every thing the heart of woman most desires, and not repay it by the gift of the purest and truest affection that ever girl on earth had to offer.

She asked herself no questions; her imagination dwelt not upon love and lovers: she was far too deeply engaged in the cares and anxieties of her daily life for such things. But she had found in him a brother and a friend, and as such she loved him fervently.

She only wished it might be ever in her power to repay by kindness to him all the kindness he lavished upon her.

She could only show her gratitude by the care of his little dog; that was all she could do. The little dog fared pretty well, you may be sure.

He, on his side, had scarcely formed what can be called a plan. I believe men very often continue in this state till the necessity of separating, or coming to a final resolution, awakens them from their love-dream, and forces them into a decision.

His imagination dwelt in that paradise—yclept of fools—in which we reconcile all contradiction of circumstances, and make every thing accord to our wishes.

He would have liked to have made her his, and continued this life for ever; but he knew it was impossible it could last long; and yet, to take Angela from her solitude, to detach her from that romantic life which, like the background of some fine picture, lent such charms to the principal figure, was what he could not endure the thoughts of.

How did he know but that, once introduced into the great world, Angela might become much as other young ladies, as lovely as herself, every day become,—that the noble freshness, the sweet wildness of spirit, the innocence of her heart, and the warmth of her affections—all the qualities which he so dearly prized—would not be gradually deadened and destroyed?

Besides, it was not herself alone that so delighted him; it was this simple form of existence which suited his fancy so well: it was in harmony with all his faults and with all his good qualities,—the simplicity of his taste as with the indolence of his temper,—his indifference to artificial show as well as his negligent contempt of human society,—his generous and affectionate disposition as well as his aversion to business or scenes of real misery,—his humanity and his fastidiousness, at once.

He had no scruple about making himself a place in Angela's affections, should that be the result of all these drawing lessons, these walks and talks together. In that case he would think himself bound in honor to marry her, and there was nothing he would have liked better than to feel so bound: it would make an end of all hesitations at once.

Such is man! so does he play with his duties and his principles: thus does he love to be cheated into a situation which he wants courage to choose himself.

They used to walk in the fine summer evenings, which were now come on, under the trees of the orchard; for they never left the garden together—he would not ask that: while Margaret, gaining strength every day, would sit observing them. She would smile at herself for the astonishment with which the endless talk of these two would fill her,—these two, whom she looked upon as all but declared lovers; and then, with a sigh, recollect the endless nothings

which from her own lost lover's lips had possessed such power to charm.

And then she would look with new pleasure upon this world to which she seemed about to be restored, as her heart expanded with the delight of seeing that dear and generous girl so happy.

Happy in that best and most blessed of lives, where useful daily occupation is combined with all the sweetest ideal of passion.

Ay, passion! it was become passion at last.

Sweet Angela! your heart, so warm and true, has not been able to resist the insidious approaches of that passion which in hearts so warm and true makes its abode. That hand which passed through his arm is now held fast in his! How softly it trembles as he talks and talks, in that low and earnest voice of his, of things to which her spirit responds so deeply,—as he speaks of life, and feeling, and nature, and of the soul, and of God!

Not perhaps in those awe-struck terms, not with those clear perceptions, by which the Christian enters in the inner temple of the heart, viewing the great *Reality*; but with those lovely, vague dreams of divinity—those idealisms, if I may say so, of the excellent and the good, so captivating to the young and unchastened mind, which has yet to learn how necessary it is, in the hard strife of life, to have the heart anchored firm in faith against the Rock of Ages.

They would sit at Margaret's feet, side by side, reading out of the same book; turning the page, looking up at each other as any passage struck them as peculiarly beautiful. They became as one soul.

They loved as lovers should, as lovers used to do.

Alas, poor Old Man! that day is with you far, far away, melting into the faint, lovely blue of distance—all indistinct, but still most heavenly fair. I leave the task to others—to the sweet Bremer—to paint the heart's first passion.

The sterner tasks are mine.

* * * * *

The lesson was finished.

He had taken very great pains to make his ideas clearly understood, and to assist her in endeavoring to work according to them. He would have deserved a large sum as a master, and such a master is probably not to be purchased for gold.

L'amour peintre.

He did not, like the artist of Antwerp, become a painter for love; but he certainly became an excellent teacher of painting.

And the same influence seemed to inspire his pupil. Her improvement under his instructions had been really astonishing.

He had brought, as I have told you, pencils and colors, and had begun to initiate her into the secrets of the bewitching art of water-color drawing, and her progress had equally pleased and astonished Margaret. As for him, he did not care much about the progress. I suppose, since the world began, never did one fall in love with another for their excellence in water-color drawing; but he cared excessively for the lesson; he took a delight in it which is not to be described. He had never been engaged in so interesting an occupation since he was born.

The whole scene was one of enchantment to him.

The perfect quiet around, the beauty of the garden and trees, the gentle invalid reposing under their shade,—the little children running in just now and then, merely, as it were, to make a variety, never bothering or tormenting him, for they were delicate and gentle little creatures. He, sitting by Angela, instructing her, guiding her pencil, listening to her simple and unaffected, yet animated and intelligent talk, watching her lovely countenance all the while. Gradually and insensibly sliding into the place of friend, and receiving, in return for his kindness and almost reverential respect, the first confidences of a heart which had nothing to disguise, and which only most innocently and unconsciously betrayed, in every word and sentiment, the beauty of its high and generous nature.

Do you think he was happy, or not?

I have said how much he disliked the common run of young ladies, to him they had always appeared so exceedingly insipid. He was so romantic, this young man. And he certainly had what must appear to many of you such strange, absurd notions. Assuredly, he did wish to spend his life in a somewhat different manner from the way in which it was passed by most about him; and to love, and to be loved for his own sake alone, was one of his dearest dreams. He would have liked, I believe, in his present humor, to have laid down all the appendages of his rank, and become, in fact, the character he assumed, of a young artist, dependent upon his talent for his bread; he would have liked to have had his wife and children to actually maintain, so that wife had been as charming as Angela, and the home as quiet and as pleasant as this one she occupied. He could not help grieving when he thought that the day must come when these disguises must have an end, and he appear in his true shape again; and when, *if*—if that *if* ever came to pass—he must enter with her into the old wearisome life of the world, make a fine lady of her, put

her in a grand dining-room, or, worse and worse, see her perhaps dressed *à l'amazone*, riding a fine horse in the Park, surrounded by cavaliers—in the style his very heart abhorred—or else running about, like all the rest of the world, for four or five months of every year, from dinner to dinner, and from rout to ball and breakfast; and the other seven, occupied with a house full of company, or wasting life at a watering-place, while he, distracted with the hurry, a stranger almost to his wife, lived the life, to him so unsatisfactory, which—all the world did. For, romantic as he was, he could not but suppose, that when he returned to the great world, it must go with him much as it went with the rest of the great world around him.

To his mind, this return to ordinary life was, in idea, like a return to this working-day world after an excursion of a month or so into fairy-land.

Thus did his busy and lively imagination work, and it is astonishing in what strong colors it painted all these things to him.

But why, he often said to himself, why alter the situation in which he found himself so happy, and in which she seemed so happy, so long as he was at her side, and want could be kept from the door?

All sorts of wild schemes began to occupy him.

"Now Angela," said he, "the lesson is over. I have taken very great pains with you, and I have never asked for a reward. I am going to ask for it now; will you refuse it?"

How they had advanced! They were Angela and Carteret; but then, to be sure, his lessons had lasted now some weeks. This speech of his was not made at all in a way which warns a young lady that any thing very interesting is going to be said to her. Angela neither blushed, nor cast down her eyes, nor stammered, nor looked silly.

But she looked up at him in a way peculiarly her own, and, with an expression of the most endearing confidence in him, said—

"I am so glad that you have at last found any thing in the world that I can do for you."

"You must let me have your picture."

"My picture! What can you be thinking of? My picture! in this place! and who is to take it?"

"I mean to take it myself."

"I thought you only drew trees and houses."

"Oh, yes! I can take likenesses, I think. I want to try to take yours. I must have it with me when I go away. I must go away some time or other, I suppose."

"Ah, yes; so indeed I suppose you must!" and she shook her head; and a sudden darkness, as of sorrow, passed over her face. "Yes, I know you must."

"And when I am gone you will not forget me quite, Angela?"

She smiled.

The smile said plainly enough, "I am not very likely to do that."

"I shall feel very lonely when I am gone away from you. I have been so happy here; but go away I must—at least, for a short time. I should like to have your picture; it would remind me of these days—these tranquil, happy days. Not that I should ever be in danger of forgetting them. No, no; you are more likely to forget me."

As he went on in this way, he was busy scratching away with his pencil, and his head was bent down over the paper; he seemed to be rather talking to himself than to her.

"There are things that must be done. I had better go and set about them at once, and then it will be all plain sailing on my part. Yes, yes."

"But I must have your picture," raising his head from the paper, and looking at her. "I never saw such a beautiful outline in my life. There, just as you sit there. Sewing, are you? How industrious you are!"

"I had need be industrious, as you very well know."

"What abominable coarse work, too, you have in your fingers! What can it be?"

"Neither more nor less than some coarse sheets for Mrs. Whitwell," said she. "Fine needle-work is not much wanted in these parts, and those who have to get their livings must take what employment they can find. I am sure, if you knew how happy I have been since I have made six or seven shillings a week with my needle, you would reverence needlework for the rest of your life."

"I can not endure to see *your* hands employed about such coarse stuff. I never saw such horrid stuff."

He looked at those fair, delicate hands. They were, it is true, already looking rather redder and rougher since she had begun to sew so assiduously. He liked labor in the ideal; but he could not bear even this trifling ill effect of it in actuality.

He was inconsistent, like all the rest of us. He would fain enjoy the freedom of poverty, and the wholesome happiness resulting from necessary employment, and yet he could not endure its most trifling ill consequences. Ill consequences! I am ashamed of myself for using the word.

"I can not bear to see you at this sort of work, he went on, "and for such a miserable remuneration."

"I am sorry for you," said she, plying her needle so industriously all the time that she did not even look at him; "but a few shillings to me is more than thousands, perhaps, to many others; and really, to tell truth, I do not care what I do, so I can but earn a little money."

"Well, but I thought we were agreed you were to earn money by your talents. When I go to London, I thought you were to intrust me with some of your drawings; I have little doubt I shall get a considerable price for some of them, and I like to think of you as employing your time upon things more suited to your genius and your station, and not upon such sordid labor as this."

"If I can sell my drawings, no doubt I may spend my time much more profitably; and when you go to London, if you can help me to a purchaser, it will be as if I had discovered a gold mine."

"Then, in the mean time, indulge me with laying down this horrid work, which is so totally unfit for you."

And he took hold of it to take it from her.

"No," said she, "don't ask me. Why should I? Why should it be unfit for me?"

"Your position—your education—your birth—the daughter of an officer and a gentleman—such a wretched, menial employment!"

"My position! my education! my father's station!—alas, alas! Mr. Carteret, what empty words are these! You would not have me so very, very silly as to refuse the means of getting bread when I really want it—by any humble means? Indeed, I am very thankful to be able to do it in this way, which does not expose me to any menial office such as I really should not like. But, dear me! as to sewing coarse cloth, I only wish good Mrs. Whitwell wanted work enough done to employ me twelve hours out of the twenty-four. I don't care what I do, so that I do but get money. You have no idea of the pleasure I take in getting money. I sometimes think how lucky it is for me that I am obliged to do it; it seems quite my nature. I don't know what would become of me if I had happened to be a fine lady."

As she spoke, she was turning the great lumbering sheet, and beginning at the other end. He got up to help her with it.

"Only look at your finger!" said he.

"I *might* as well use Margaret's silver guard, at least," she said—she began to care about the condition of her forefinger as soon as she saw the look, almost of disgust, with which he regarded it, all dis-

figured with the effects of her coarse work—"but as for the sewing, pray don't try to put me out of humor with it, it is the best resource we have as yet."

She rose and fetched the guard, and put it upon her finger, but she could not work so fast with it.

The elegancies of life, and the demands of industry, will often interfere with each other; we must take our choice.

"I won't take your picture doing that," said he, rising from the table; "I will take it when you are reading to Margaret."

"I am so sorry, Mr. Carteret," said Angela, in a somewhat more serious tone, "to see you try to give me a disgust for this work, which you know I ought cheerfully to do. You know I have my bread to earn, and not only my own bread, but that of others. Ought I to be above any employment, however humble, that assists me to do this? What claims have I to be more fastidious than others? Those whom God has placed among the poor, ought to accept their condition, without repining, from his hands. I own it was very difficult indeed for me to submit, when I did not know where to get money enough to live upon; but now Mrs. Whitwell furnishes me with sewing, I should be a wretch and a fool if I did not gratefully—thankfully—accept it. I should be worse than a fool to vex myself about that. Sewing coarse cloth which hurts my fingers a little—a great matter, indeed. Why, you are as bad as old Nurse; what a to-do she made about it!"

"Well, I wonder almost that you have not more sense of your own dignity, than to condescend to such employments."

"*That* is not said from the heart, Mr. Carteret," looking up at him steadily; "*that* is no sentiment of yours, I am sure. You are only trying me now. I should, indeed, sink in my own opinion, if I thought I could be degraded by work."

"Angela, let me draw you just as you sit there."

"Ah, you have changed your mind; I know much must be forgiven to you artists," she said; "to your love of the beautiful, that foundation of all fine taste, must be pardoned much: but there is a love better than that, Mr. Cartaret—there is in this world what is more precious than the mere beautiful."

"Just as you sit there—you have given me a lesson; may I never forget it. I will take you there, as you are stitching away at that odious piece of sail-cloth; it will remind me of what you said—yes, there is in this world *much* that is more precious than the mere beautiful."

"And what am I seeking in life," was the return he made upon

himself. "but the mere beautiful—the mere beautiful in letters, the mere beautiful in the external world, the mere beautiful even in morals?—Poor!—this noble creature has very different objects."

"The *useful*, you mean?" (aloud.)

"Yes, of course; the poor, homely, despised useful. Oh, Mr. Carteret, if you knew Margaret as I do, you would adore the useful, when you could make it useful to her."

"Pray sit where you are, and let me draw you, with your coarse sheet."

"That is impossible, for it is done; and, oh, how glad I am," cried she, springing up, "for I am *so* tired of sewing. And now my task for the day is over, help me to fold it up, for it really is too heavy for me, and then you will for once taste the sweets of being useful."

She laughed as he rose up, looking rather vexed and disappointed, to assist her to fold up her work.

In such conversations he could have gone on for ever. She was so artless, so unaffected, so lively, so simple, in the expression of her opinions—had so much character and spirit in all she said and did.

I give but a poor, feeble picture of her.

She looked charmingly happy when her work was over. She enjoyed a little leisure after labor so intensely. It was so delightful to go out under the walnut-trees, imbibe the fresh air, to have nothing to do but to tend Margaret; or, more dangerously enchanting to walk round the walks of that little garden, a child in one hand, listening to that voice which was to her but too seductive.

Nothing enhances the value of life like industry. Cheerful industry is the true wine of existence; and blessed with such an unrepinning spirit as hers, she enjoyed the fruits of her exertion in their full perfection. No false pride, no envious comparison with others, no weak sense of humiliation at the idea of her lowly lot, ever marred her happiness for a single moment.

The only thing that could have diminished her enjoyment in her present mode of life, and her indifference to the humility of that position to which she seemed condemned, would have been the idea that it might possibly lessen her value in the eyes of Carteret; but in spite of the little fastidious notions to which he gave vent, now and then, her heart told her—and told her truly—there was no danger of that sort to be apprehended.

To do the sex justice, I believe a very great many of them would, just as cheerfully as she did, lay down their privilege of being useless, could they but be convinced that by so doing they would not be lowered in the estimation of the men they loved.

It is not the privations of poverty, but its humiliations—it is that most mortifying of humiliations, the experience that men are really loved and valued the less for it—nay, even by those nearest and dearest to their hearts—which embitters its sting in this country of ours. A certain consideration in the eyes of their fellows is dear to every one, and to find it thus diminished, by the want of wealth, is a fearful trial of both fortitude and candor.

Angela had no uncomfortable feelings of this sort to contend with. She believed Mr. Carteret, indeed, to be nearly as poor as herself, and as he was certainly less inclined to exertion, perhaps, really poorer; but although there was an elegance in his tone and manner, which impressed her with an inexplicable feeling of his superiority to every person she had seen before, yet, to this was united so much gentleness, so much kindness, a something so like respect, in his conduct to her and Margaret, that she felt bound to him by the most perfect admiration and confidence, unmingled with any of those little drawbacks which, in the world mar, or, at least, greatly diminish, such pleasant emotions.

He looked very grave when this little conversation had ended, as he sat watching Angela, with an expression which his face had never assumed before.

When she had finished folding up and laying aside her work, he had followed her into the garden. He seemed trying to shake off the gravity of his humor, and going up to Margaret's couch,—

“I have been having a lecture, Margaret,” said he—she was lying as usual under the trees—“upon the union of the useful and the beautiful. Angela would fain persuade me to like to see her sewing at a coarse sheet.”

“Those whom Angela provides, by her industry, with bread, may easily believe in the union of the useful and the beautiful,” said Margaret, tenderly fixing her eyes upon Angela, who did at that moment most certainly exhibit an example of the beautiful, at least.

CHAPTER XIII.

Behold ! I see the haven nigh at hand,
To which I mean my weary course to bend.

SPENSER.

He walked home in deep reverie.

His thoughts had never before, much as he had mused, and much as he had reflected, been directed into their present channel ; he had not, strange it is to say, but the case is far from uncommon, he had never taken this earnest, serious view of life before.

He *had* been content to spend his existence in the worship of the beautiful ; that idolatry of the soul, that paganism which substitutes one attribute of the divine source of being for many, falls short of the perfect fullness of the great idea, and adores the part instead of the whole.

He had been so accustomed, from his earliest years, to this reverence for the beautiful, that he thought he did wisely and well in the devoting of his heart and his life to this false worship, and absorbed in the grand exterior of the mystic temple, he had forgotten the holy of holies within ; he had forgotten *good* in *beauty*.

He had forgotten that life was a severe and earnest, often a sore and painful, always a serious and sublime thing, and that the soul of man was not constituted to find the fullness of its perfection in the mere cultivation of those tastes intended but to refine and bless the intervals of repose during the great moral task. He had forgotten the fate of those nations who to such cultivation had given the pre-eminent rank, the moral darkness which had gradually gathered over them, the depths of iniquity into which they had finally sunk.

He had indulged himself in that too fastidious love of elegance, refinement, and the luxury of the eye, which has such a tendency to enervate the soul ; but he awakened as from a trance at the simple example set before him by that brave and generous girl—that almost child, as he at times thought her. He admired her simple energy, her disregard of every minor object, in the noble effort to provide for the wants of others ; her magnanimous contempt of what so many would have thought degradation—engrossed as she was in that one idea, of making herself useful to those dependent upon her.

He contrasted the strength of her singleness of purpose with the

vain confusion of his own pursuits and aims; and the tender interest which her helpless situation and her loveliness had inspired, began to be succeeded by a more earnest sentiment.

He began to esteem her.

His plans had been till now, I repeat, uncertain. He had never precisely asked himself, as he ought to have done, in what the romance which he had begun was to end. His conscience had been pacified with respect to his continual visits, by the recollection that the drawing-lessons were a matter of serious importance to both, and that Margaret was evidently most anxious that Angela should profit by the advantage—that her proficiency under his care was unquestionable, and that his presence and his little gifts had exercised a most beneficial influence upon the health of the poor mother, which indeed was every day improving.

A dishonorable thought it was impossible should ever cross his mind; he dreamed—when he dreamed upon the subject of a secret marriage—that dangerous delusion—he had a sort of fancy that he might make Angela his, without taking her from that simple life in which he loved to dwell with her. But now other thoughts began to arise in his mind.

The conversation had been trifling enough, you will think, but it had been full of significance to him.

This noble independence of thought and action, this true moral force, this courageous acceptance of life with all its hardships, this devotion to others, this ready self-sacrifice! He had seen the indications of these things daily, but they seemed never to have struck him with their full force until now.

He now saw that in her, which made him finally resolve upon calling her wife.

United to her, he felt that he should himself be animated to nobler purposes and higher aims than those in which he had so idly indulged. He felt within himself the capacity to take a leading, and to play a useful and honorable part among men: the spirit, the energy, the right ambition, had been alone wanting, but these his better angel would supply.

He was lost in such ruminations, as, accompanied by his little dog, now completely restored by her care, he crossed the fields on his return.

As he came upon the ridge which commanded the fine view of Sherington, its woods, and mere, and river, and lawns, and hills, he paused and gazed upon the wide expanse of prospect which, seen from these heights, extended far into the distance, melting into the

blue horizon. The sun was just setting in all his glory, and the heavens were one blaze of crimson, gold, and pale ethereal green: ten thousand luminous clouds, bathed in the glowing light, seemed like islands of the blest floating in the depths of ether, and the noble planet slowly descending behind the hills, presented that image which has so often been repeated by poet and by sacred psalmist, of a giant course of usefulness and splendor closing in a sublimity of rest.

He stood gazing at it long.

And his imagination, as so many, many imaginations have done, and will ever do, interpreted those hieroglyphics in the mystic tablets of nature, which convey such moral lessons to man.

"Such," thought he, "is the end of a day spent like hers.

"No portion wasted, no moment misapplied.

"Advancing steadily in the course before her, diffusing blessings upon every side.

"She is now only in her dawn of beauty, in the ascendant of her path; but so has she risen upon the earth, beneficent and good.

"And so she pursues, and will pursue, her course, simple, serene, undeviating. So will she travel onward, and glory shall attend upon her decline.

"And what have I been doing?

"What a contrast is my life!

"What have I to show, in return for talents bestowed? what object have I fulfilled? what good have I effected?"

He stood and gazed long, and his heart grew stronger and better. Then twilight drew her soft dewy veil over the earth, and the nightingale began her song, and the stock-dove gently cooed, and the moon rose above the hill behind him, and threw her clear, bright, silvery light, on tree and glittering brook.

And so he went onward to his home, a wiser and a better man.

The next day was Sunday.

He had never ventured to visit Mrs. Whitwell's farm upon a Sunday. Wanting the excuse in the drawing lessons, he had felt that it was not quite right to come; that it might excite observation, perhaps scandal. The Sundays thus spent at home had been excessively tedious. And it had required all the virtue he possessed to abstain from paying his usual visits; but he did abstain.

This Sunday, however, there seemed no longer any necessity to exercise so much prudence.

The reflections of a sleepless night had added strength to the

resolutions of the preceding evening. His mind was made up; there remained nothing but to assure himself that he possessed her heart; that as an artist, dependent upon his own exertions for bread, he had secured the treasure, and that thus to the happiness of having inspired a disinterested affection he had united the exquisite delight of elevating the woman he loved to a station so far above the most romantic expectation which she could ever by possibility have formed.

He had not much doubt of her affection, to be sure.

Artless and confiding as was her manner of showing it, he could not but feel sure that he was dear to her. He had made up his mind to declare his passion at once. He, however, resolved to do violence to his impatience, and wait to walk over until the evening.

Evening was the only portion of the day when Angela was quiet and disengaged. He should then find her and Margaret alone in the orchard, and he could enjoy one of those walks they had so often taken together, under the shade of the large hedge-row trees.

It was a sweet evening at the latter end of July. He recollected it many and many a year afterward, and so did she.

A Sunday evening in July is so delicious, with the hedge-rows straggling about in all their wild beauty, with the fresh-cut hay perfuming the gently playing breeze, the stilly sound of distant voices in the air, as maids and youths return from church together through the fields, all enjoying this day of peace and rest, while the bells are ringing sweetly from the distant church-tower, seen peeping from among the trees.

How calm were his thoughts, how full his heart, swelling with real, tender, honest, genuine love; to which was now added, the sacred sentiment that she he loved must soon, in fact, become his own. Not that he intended this day to make a positive, formal declaration of his passion; but he meant to allow himself what would be to him a great indulgence, that of permitting some indications of those feelings, which he had till then honorably concealed, to escape, and thus to try the ground a little.

He opened the garden-gate, and stealing round the corner of the house, stood a little while concealed by the tall shrubs in the border, looking in upon the little family in the orchard.

There they all were.

Margaret, as usual, upon her couch, half raised, and leaning upon her elbow, was watching the group before her. Her pale face tinted with a faint crimson, her delicate hair falling round her

cheeks, a small invalid cap upon her head; dressed in long and flowing drapery of muslin, she looked almost like some beautiful sculptured image already laid upon a marble tomb. Her eyes, bright with the consuming fire within, were fixed with a sort of mournful tenderness upon those she loved so infinitely.

Angela, too, was that day dressed in white, and her long brown tresses hung on each side of her face. She was sitting upon a low seat at a little distance from Margaret, with a small round table before her; she looked like a beautiful figure of Charity, as we sometimes see her represented; for Margaret's baby was asleep in her arms, and the two other children—the little boy and girl—were kneeling upon each side of her lap.

They were saying their prayers—or rather she was praying with them and for them—repeating, in a low voice, those addresses to the great Father of them all, which they were too young as yet to be trusted to repeat by themselves.

Her soft and serious voice—the holy awe, mingled with love, upon her beautiful countenance—the loveliness of the two little children—the quiet evening—the distant church-bell—the air swaying in the green branches—it was, indeed, a charming scene!

He stood drinking it all in with his eyes.

Presently the prayer was ended; the little ones rose from their knees; she bent down and kissed them, leaning over the sleeping infant; and then the little Lucinda, throwing her arm around her neck, seemed to whisper some request.

He could not hear what it was that the child begged for, but her words were,

“Angela, sing us the Sicilian Mariner's Hymn now, for we have been very good to-day; and let me sing it, too, will you?”

And while the little boy, beckoned by his mother, ran to her, and, her arm over his shoulder, stood there, as if, like himself, entranced with the music, Angela sang this simple and beautiful melody, followed by the clear, shrill, childish voice of the little girl.

So sweet a voice—so full, so rich, so perfect in its intonation, it is not one's lot often to hear.

Soft and slow, “like a rich distilled perfume,” it did, indeed, rise in the still evening, “taking silence ere she was aware;” while, her face lifted up, and her eyes filled with a tender seriousness, in character with that Heaven to which at that moment she seemed to belong—she sang the Vesper Hymn.

He had a soul for music—he felt he knew not how. He had observed the unclosed piano-forte, but he had never asked to have it

opened. In general, he cared for young ladies' music as little as he cared for their accomplishments.

The hymn was finished ; but he stood still, hoping for more.

But more came not. Margaret withdrew her slender arm from her little boy's neck. Angela rose from her seat, the little girl ran away with her brother to play. Angela then carried the slumbering infant up to Margaret ; the poor young mother bent her head over her baby, and kissed its rosy cheek : two tears—two large tears, but no more rolled over it.

"Nay, my dear, dear Margaret," said Angela, tenderly, "do not despair ; you are better—you are so much better, you will recover ; you will live to see this little one a man."

"Do you think so, love?" was the reply, with a sweet but sad smile. "Ah, my Angela ! there is something here which tells me, that before these leaves are fallen under your feet, the poor mother will have closed her eyes, and lie under the turf in the churchyard. My baby ! sweet, sweet baby ! But you will be a mother to him—to them all, Angela."

"Oh, Margaret, do not talk so ; you are so much better. Please God, with perseverance in our present plan, we shall see you walking about again soon. Why do you feel so sad to-day ? Yesterday you were in such spirits about yourself."

"I don't know," said she, stooping down, and kissing the dimpled hand of the little infant, and then that of Angela, which supported it ; "I don't know, we can not account for these things ; but to-day, the conviction that I must soon depart seems stronger upon me than ever. Perhaps it is this sweet, heavenly afternoon—there is something in me, at such a time, that almost longs to be dissolved and die. Besides, dear as these are, you know where my treasure is, Angela."

"When I am gone," after a little while she went on, "you will prove a mother to them, I know. Sweet maiden mother!—sweet angel mother!" looking at her, as there she stood, with the most affectionate admiration.

"Young saint!—young angel!—young Saint Theresa!" he kept repeating to himself ; he did not know how to express his feelings.

Angela pressed the little infant to her bosom as her only reply, and the tears stood in her eyes.

Whenever Margaret was desponding about herself, Angela's spirits were depressed too. Much better her patient certainly was for the more generous system of living which had been adopted ; but there were days when she seemed to retrograde rapidly, and

be just as ill again as ever: at these times she was more than usually low about herself. Though anxious to live for her children, life had lost its relish when her husband died; and she was, as far as she herself was concerned, quite indifferent about it—so indifferent, indeed, existence had become, so worthless, that this distaste of life seemed actually to weaken the resistance her constitution might otherwise have maintained against advancing disease.

Carteret now came forward.

Angela was startled by his unexpected appearance, but, coloring high with pleasure, advanced to meet him, still holding the little baby in her arms.

Thus occupied, he could not take her hand in his to raise it to his lips; but he stooped down and kissed the sleeping child's face, resisting with difficulty the temptation of kissing at the same time the soft hand which supported its head.

"I never saw you in the character of a young nursery-maid before, I think," said he, looking at her with a tender smile.

"Nurse and Biddy are both at church. On Sunday afternoons I always take care of the baby."

She looked at it softly, and bent her neck, and kissed it as she spoke.

He felt in a strange confusion of sweet feelings.

What would it be, *when—if*—this sweet saint were a real mother—a mother of *his* child?

"I have seen you in many characters now," said he, speaking with an air of serious tenderness which he had never allowed himself to assume before. "I thought I knew you well, but I had not seen you as you are this afternoon, Angela."

In a little confusion at this, she turned away to Margaret. The words were insignificant, but his looks told that which they had never told before; her heart began to beat quicker than usual, and a strange dizziness—a momentary darkness—troubled her sight; but she struggled to conceal her emotion, and as she turned away, in a voice as articulate as she could make it, she said,

"How do you think Margaret looks to-day? She is low about herself this afternoon."

"I feel that you both look," said he, for he really could not repress his admiration, "as if you belonged to a sphere very far removed from this. I could almost feel afraid lest you were both about to spread your wings and fly away. But, dear Mrs. Nevil," taking her hand and pressing it kindly, "you must not despond. I think you are even looking better to-day than usual; pray try to feel it so."

She shook her head, but made no answer.

Again he turned to Angela.

"You are tired, are you not, with carrying that little child so long? I wish you would let me take it. I shall be a sad, awkward nurse, I fear. I never held a little-thing of that sort in my arms in my life; but I would do any thing in the world to help or be of service to you."

"No, I am not tired at all, thank you," was all she said, but with a glance—such a gentle, tender glance! Her heart was, indeed, overflowing with sweetness; the words, and still more the tone in which they were spoken, gave her such a thrill of delight: she managed to say this, but she could say no more at the moment.

Her countenance said much, however; and he read its meaning almost with ecstasy.

"At least, then," persisted he, "let me fetch your chair here—the low chair in which you were sitting just now. I should like to see you sitting so again. I should like to have drawn you so—but no matter," he added, in a lower voice, "the picture is painted indelibly *here*."

Then he went and fetched the low chair on which she had been sitting, and put it in the shade, at a little distance from Margaret's couch; and having seated her there, with the infant still in her arms, he went and fetched another chair for himself, and sat down close by her side, seemingly occupied in watching the baby.

"How peacefully it sleeps!" said he, looking at it with a sort of curiosity; "and how pretty it is! I could not have thought that so young a child could have been so pretty. What little dimpled hands!—they look as if they were molded in wax; and that little, round, meaningless face—yet so full of meaning! I perceive the old masters only idealized Nature when they painted the cherub faces so full of love and innocence."

He kept looking at the child—at the tiny fingers; and from the tiny fingers his eye wandered to that beautiful and delicate hand which lay upon the little frock, clasping it; and from thence he raised his eyes to gaze upon her face. It was bent down toward the infant, her dark eyelashes falling upon her cheek, which was glowing with tender pleasure; and a sweet, pensive smile was upon her lips.

It seemed to him as if he had never really seen her before, she looked so surpassingly lovely in the still repose of that afternoon—a repose so congenial to the deep sensibility of her nature—a repose in which she so seldom allowed herself to indulge.

There are moments when the soul seems to shine with a peculiar brightness through its earthly tenement, irradiating it with an almost supernatural beauty; rapt devotion, and what is next to it, pure and fervent love, will, at times, work the miracle.

The next thing he said, in a very low voice, so as to be heard only by herself, was,

“How you must love these little creatures!”

A gentle pressure of the infant to her breast was the only answer.

“But I think you are formed to love all God’s creatures.”

She could make no answer to this, but she turned her large, pure eyes full upon him; her heart was indeed at that moment overflowing with love for every thing that breathed.

For was he not there beside her?—had he not come at an unusual hour?—were not his voice, his look, his language, such as they had never been before?

Was not that enough to overwhelm her, as it were, in one boundless ocean of bliss?

Alas! young, ignorant, she knew not, she asked not; unconsciously she turned her eyes upon him in answer to his question, but they fell instantly under his gaze.

“I saw you just now praying with them,” he began again.

“Yes,” she said, very softly, “I would teach them as early as possible to turn, poor orphans! to their kind Father.”

“And then I heard you sing a hymn to them—I did not know that you sang.”

“Sometimes I do, or, rather, used to do; but our hearts have been too sad lately for singing. I thought we had almost forgotten it altogether, but little Lucy, you see, remembered it. Do you love music?”

“Not generally, I believe: but there is some music that stirs my soul like a passion; some tones that come over me and master me entirely. Then I am no longer myself; I am like the royal youth in the hands of ‘Timotheus placed on high,’” said he, laughing a little. “I am like the statue of Memnon, which was roused to utter sounds when the sunbeams fell upon it. I am like any thing most fabulous and extravagant; my soul seems then as if it were some strange instrument which responds to the touch of another, and utters a voice scarcely my own. I can believe in the old fable of Orpheus getting the stocks and stones about him, and moving the darkest abyss of hell itself by the strange pathos of his lyre. I am just inclined to feel in this way this very afternoon, Angela.”

"Are you talking of her singing, Mr. Carteret?" said Margaret: from the place where she lay she had overheard part of the last speech, for his voice had been a little raised, as he warmed with his subject.

"She has a sweet voice, I think, but I can not often hear it now—it excites me more than is good; but this afternoon that simple hymn was like balm pouring upon my heart. Don't think me affected for speaking in this way. When they are come back from church, and you have parted with your little charge, my Angela, you shall sing us that sweet and solemn 'Agnus Dei' your father loved so well, and that I have never had courage to ask you to sing since his death."

"I know not how it is," said she to herself, as she sank down again upon her pillow, "but there seems a strange, pleasing melancholy, about me this day."

They all three appeared to be in some measure under the same influence.

Certainly there was a glow, and yet a something peculiarly gentle and tender, almost to sadness, expressed in the faces of the young circle.

"Will you think me unworthy to share in that sacred remembrance, Angela? Will you not sing that song which your father loved to one who, if he had known him, would have loved him too—who, unknown, loves his memory for your sake? Tell me, Angela," and he laid his hand upon hers, "say you will not exclude me from this companionship—say you will sing the 'Agnus Dei' to me."

He felt her hand tremble under his.

Again one glance from her eyes, suddenly raised and as suddenly withdrawn, was her only answer.

It was impossible for her to speak.

"Angel!" he said, in a deep, low voice, "I adore you."

And now the latch of the garden-gate was heard to open, and the sound of approaching footsteps coming up the gravel-walk. He drew his chair hastily a little distance away, and she involuntarily moved hers.

Nurse and Biddy, as arriving from church, now entered the orchard, with their prayer-books in their hands. Biddy went straight into the house. Nurse came up to the party under the walnut-tree. The old woman started a little when she saw Mr. Carteret sitting there, and made a face as if she were not at all pleased. She muttered something to herself which nobody but herself could hear or

understand—it was to the effect that she wondered at the imprudence of her mistress, and that she knew no more of the world than the babe unborn; and what would they all do if she were not there to look after them! Then she came up to Margaret and said, crossly enough—

“I was wondering whether you’d have the sense to ask for a shawl or summut to be laid over you. But you never thought of it, I’ll be bound! And as for Miss Angela,” glancing at her with no very pleasant eye, “she’s always so engaged now-a-days, that she forgets every thing!”

“Nay, Nurse,” said Margaret, soothingly, “don’t be angry with either of us: the evening is so warm, that I never felt the least want of a shawl! and as for Angela, you know she has got the baby to take care of.”

“Ay, ay, and something else, too. I’ve known the day when all the babies in the world wouldn’t have made her forget to lay a shawl over your feet, misses. Bless me, how cold they are! Here, Miss Angela,” going up to her, “give us the baby, and I’ll send Biddy down with something to lay over your mamma’s feet: they’re as cold as ice, I can tell you, while you are sitting gallivanting here.”

Angela’s face was covered with blushes; to hide her confusion she said hurriedly—

“You look to Margaret, Nurse, and I will carry the baby into the house.”

She rose hastily to go away, but Carteret, who could with pleasure have given the old woman a box upon the ear, rose and followed her.

This sudden intrusion of Nurse, as it were, into the midst of their happiness, acted like some acid—every thing seemed soured and curdled.

“Do let me carry the little creature for you,” he kept saying, as he followed her; “you totter so you can hardly walk. How easily your nerves are shaken by some things! and you so brave! really—” said he, for he could not help laughing a little at the confusion into which they had both been thrown, “it would seem as if we both dreaded that terrible nurse of yours more than we do a mad bull!”

But she could not laugh, she could not even smile—she was in great agitation. She walked fast, as if to escape from him. He saw this; he understood it all well enough, and he resolved at once to put an end to it. So he persisted in following her up the steps, through the glass door, and into the house.

They found Biddy in the dining-room, preparing the table for tea.

"Take the child, Mrs. Biddy," said Carteret, in a tone of authority, "and carry it up stairs."

Biddy obeyed this voice, of course, as it were instinctively, and Angela suffered herself to be relieved from her burden.

He followed the servant girl to the door, shut it carefully after her, and just returned in time to catch Angela by the arm as she was about to return to the garden.

"Angela," he said, "one moment: I have something to say, and you must hear me out."

He drew her gently back into the room.

"I have made my confession before, but I have had no answer. Can you love me, as you love these? Nay, speak not; for I see you can not speak: let me read your silence. Angela, will you be my wife?"

The blood rushed to her heart, a sudden faintness came over her; he caught her in his arms as she was ready to fall to the ground, pressed her to his bosom, imprinted one kiss upon her forehead as it sank upon his shoulder—and thus was the contract sealed between them.

CHAPTER XIV.

Thereat she greatly was dismayed, ne wist
How to direct her way in darkness wide.

In the mean time Nurse had been, in her usual manner when displeased, taking Margaret to task.

"I wonder at you, mistress—I really do—letting this young man, of whom we none of us know nothing at all, come dangling after Miss Angela in this fashion, teaching her drawing—on week-days, well and good, as she must get her living by her parts, poor thing, one of these days, I'm much afeard—but Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, *and* Saturdays, is, in my opinion, more than enough; and when it comes to Sundays, too, I say you ought to look to it."

Margaret, at this attack, looked extremely confused, hurried, and frightened, but she seemed to want strength to answer it. Nurse went on:—

"I wonder what my poor master would have thought, to see *his* daughter hand-and-glove with a nobody knows what—a poor adventurer! artist, you call him. Mrs. Whitwell knows well enough what them artists are made of, she says. A pretty companion for Miss Angela! A mere drawing-master, I'll be bound—going wandering about taking likenesses at five shillings a-head, without another penny to bless himself with, for any thing you, or I, or Miss Angela—bless her, sweet lamb!—knows. But before he's to come here Sundays, like an equal and a gentleman, as he pretends to be— Only look at his dress to-day—I wonder at his impudence! But"—

"There!" turning suddenly round, "I declare if they aren't in the dining-room together, now! But I'll be after them, won't I?"

What would have been poor Angela's agonies of shame, if she could have known that that sacred kiss of betrothal which he impressed upon her forehead, had been witnessed by another?

Nurse, in the midst of her indignation, did not ascend the steps very quietly, and, on hearing her coming, Angela hastily raised her head from Carteret's shoulder, and immediately left the room.

He turned his back to the glass-door, and pretended to be studying the print of "Pamela receiving her Father and Mother," which hung against the wall.

Bold as she was in a good cause, there was something about his figure and appearance that day, which imposed even upon Nurse.

He was dressed with more care than usual. Unintentionally, indeed, he had dressed himself, as customary with him on a Sunday morning, to go to church, and no longer wore the shabby walking costume in which he appeared upon a week-day; and, thus attired, he had in the afternoon proceeded to the farm.

His very gentlemanlike appearance, when so arrayed, had not been unobserved by Margaret; nor had it altogether escaped the notice of Angela. It had added some little of pleasure, perhaps, to what had passed; for, say what they will, such things will make themselves felt, even amid the sincerest affections. Much as she loved the young man she had before seen, there was something most particularly delightful in loving him as he now appeared.

This by the way.

His appearance in this dress this day was followed, however—trivial as the circumstance might appear—with some weighty consequences.

Had he been in his walking, shabby suit, a thousand to one but Nurse would have ventured to attack him at once as the beggar and impostor she suspected him of being; but the dignity, the inborn

dignity, which his disguise had hidden from her eyes, was now not to be concealed even from her. She felt uncertain, irresolute how to act, and filled with a certain awe with which she had always been accustomed to approach those whom she had looked upon as real gentlemen.

Besides, he had his back turned toward her, and she felt it difficult to attack him in this position.

So she hesitated, muttered a few words which he did not seem to hear, and then took her departure by the inner door, grumbling and mumbling as she went along.

Had she fallen upon him with all the violence and bitterness of which her tongue was capable, it is scarcely to be doubted that, though pretty well master of himself, he would have been provoked into a full revelation of his position and plans; and matters would have taken quite a different turn from what they did. As it was, Nurse walked away, and he stood looking at the print—which, in some slight degree, associated itself with his own situation—considering what course he should take next.

Two paths lay before him: either to disclose the truth without delay, acknowledge his rank, and, by an open declaration of his attachment before the world, at once rescue Angela and himself from the equivocal situation in which they stood—

Or, persuading her to accept him in his character of artist, have the bans published in the little retired church belonging to the neighboring village, and, thus having secured her to himself, to share with her the seclusion so dear to him, and wait the guidance of events as to his future conduct.

Against the first and most obvious proceeding, many arguments suggested themselves.

First, it was excessively against his secret inclinations. The idea of a formal marriage, with lawyers, settlements, breakfast, bridesmaids, carriages and four, and postilions with large white favors, was perfectly hateful to him.

Yet, to declare his rank, appear before the public eye, and then do any thing that in the least savored of the romantic, or was out of the common course, was more abhorrent still.

There was no medium to be found here: either he must remain as he was—personating the poor, unknown artist—or he must declare his whole story at once to the world.

Besides, should he declare it, what would the inevitable consequences be?

He must expect the most violent opposition upon the part of his

father and mother, in the first place. He knew them both well, more especially his mother; he knew she would be outrageous at the bare mention of such a *mésalliance*; he knew, with all her apparent romance, there was no one more really the slave of the great world and its proprieties than she was; he knew that she would leave no means untried to prevent such a marriage—that she would be deaf to his entreaties, insensible to the merits of any one in a situation so humble; and he dreaded, moreover, lest by at once appealing to Margaret and Angela themselves, he might arouse all that was generous and delicate in their nature, and enlist their own honest pride and dignity against him—thus defeating him by the very qualities to which he looked for justification of his choice.

Moreover, he felt almost certain that, under his real designation, he should find it difficult, perhaps impossible, to overcome certain scruples, which he felt sure would arise so soon as they should learn—as learn they inevitably must—that his addresses were paid without his parents' consent.

To be banished from her presence until such consent was obtained, seemed an inevitable consequence—a consequence that he felt would be death to all his hopes and expectations. Upon the other hand—upon the romantic plan so dear to his fancy—all appeared plain sailing.

As a young artist he had been received, and cordially received, by Margaret—as a young artist he had won the heart of Angela. It was not likely, it was not possible, that he should find the least difficulty, under their present circumstances, in persuading either of them to this marriage.

Utterly destitute and defenseless as they were, and abandoned by all the world, it was not probable that Margaret would refuse for her daughter one whom she evidently regarded with an eye of favor. He certainly regretted that he had, upon the impulse of the moment, when speaking to Mrs. Whitwell, pitched his assumed condition a little too low—that for the officer's daughter it might be esteemed, among the gossips around, something of a degradation to accept him; but then, again, his heart exulted in the secret consciousness of the disinterestedness of her affection, and rejoiced in the thought of the exaltation in store for one who had proved she would descend some little for his sake.

To all these reasonings must be added his extreme impatience to give himself a right to call Angela his own,—to share with her, undisturbed, the life he so much enjoyed, and to be ready and authorized to shelter and protect her and the children, in the event of poor

Margaret's death, which, in spite of flattering appearances, he could not believe to be very far distant.

He concluded his cogitation by making up his mind—as I suppose most young men of his age would have done under the circumstances—that is, to indulge his romance and his passion at once, and, turning from the print, he proceeded to seek Margaret in the garden.

But he met with a reception he had little reason to expect.

The remonstrances of old Nurse, and, above all, the appeal to the memory of Angela's father, had filled poor Margaret with confusion and dismay. It was as if a veil had fallen from her eyes. Every thing appeared in a new light; and her brain, excited by her hurrying pulse and agitated nerves, painted her conduct with a strange and exaggerated enormity.

She was astonished at herself. How could she have been so blind, so stupid, so silly, so unguarded? Two forlorn women, and one of them eminently attractive, thus to have admitted an unknown, handsome young man, into their closest intimacy; a young man who, at the best—and who did not make the best of themselves?—had represented himself only as a penniless artist, dependent upon his profession for his bread; but whence he came—whither going—wherefore in this unaccountable manner he had visited this secluded place, had never been explained.

No account had been given of the why or the wherefore he was thus lying, as it were, hidden from the world—and at his age, too!—so young as to be scarcely properly independent! And to think that she had never once put these things properly together—had never reflected upon them as she ought—but, satisfied with his gentleman-like manners, his pleasing face, and conversation which showed him unequivocally to be a man of education, had made no further inquiries, taken him at his word without examination, and suffered—nay, taken pleasure in—the evidences of that attachment which she believed to be springing up between him and her husband's daughter!

In vain she pleaded before her conscience her failing health and spirits, her helpless condition, her languor, her lassitude and decay, the incapacity for action, even for thought, which so often overpowered her: her conscience once awakened, her self-reproaches were only rendered more acute by the fever of her spirits. Poor Margaret, the climax of her secret wishes just attained, lay in a state of extremest wretchedness, too weak to rise from her couch, and anxiously expecting the reappearance of the two from the house.

At last she saw him descend the steps, looking so charmingly!

All perplexity removed by the resolution he had taken, he came

down, his cheek yet glowing with the past emotion, his eyes bright with victory—the brightness of a happy, assured heart, and the sweetest and most affectionate of smiles upon his lips.

But his countenance of joy changed as he came nearer, and saw how ill and anxious she looked. He sat down by her side, took her hand, looked at her with great tenderness, and said,—

“Dear, dear Margaret, how sorry I am to see you look so suffering upon this the happiest day of my life! Let me get you something,” seeing her color change from red to pale, from pale to red, and her breathing appear more difficult than ever,—“let me get you something before I speak to you; indeed, I have something to say that concerns us all much. I will be as brief as I can; but what shall I get you before I begin? for indeed you look very ill.”

“No,” said she, holding fast the hand he was about to withdraw, and looking at him with those gentle, sorrowful eyes; “no, don’t hurry yourself or me.”

She began to gather a little fresh courage as she looked at him again.

“No, never did such a countenance,” thought she, “cover deceit!”

The influence he exercised over her mind was restored by his presence. She felt relieved from much of her distress, self-reproach, and terror; but she resolved, nevertheless, to be upon her guard.

He had risen, but he now sat down again, and, still holding her hand, went on:—

“Margaret, if I have read your countenance rightly, what has just passed between me and Angela can not be unexpected by you—that is to say, at least, as far as I myself am concerned. You must long have seen how deeply, devotedly, sincerely, I loved her—have loved her from the first moment I beheld her. I venture to hope that I am not indifferent to her. May I not hope that you, too, my friend, my dear, my gentle Margaret, will not oppose such feelings? I love you both tenderly. Will you bestow the hand of your Angela upon me, and suffer me to devote my life to her and you?”

He spoke—and it was natural that he should so speak—in character with his real, rather than his apparent, position; he spoke as one who feels certain that his proposals, whether accepted or not, can be regarded in no light but as an honor. He quite forgot that he was a penniless artist.

He expected, certainly, a friendly—nay, a warm and affectionate reception of his proposals upon the part of Margaret, and all that had passed justified such an expectation on his part. How was he disappointed, when, drawing away her hand, though evidently after some struggle with herself, she somewhat coldly said,—

"I do not know how I ought to receive this declaration, Mr. Carteret, at least without some preliminary explanation. You can not forget that you are a stranger to me, though, after your kind and generous——"

"Oh, oh!" cried he, looking very much hurt, "do not pain me in this way!"

"Not for the world would I do that!" said she, feeling for a moment her former security; then, relapsing into reserve, as distrust and doubt began to gather again round her thoughts, she went on thus:—

"We both—it is in vain to disguise it—feel interested in you. We both feel deeply grateful——"

"Again!" cried he, with an expression of severe pain.

"Well, then, I will say nothing of that, but will speak briefly; and pray do not be hurt at what I say, now matters have assumed this serious form. As Angela's mother—as her last protector and only friend—I feel that it would be unpardonable, without some further knowledge of you, to suffer things to proceed farther."

His countenance fell—he turned suddenly pale—he hesitated, and stammered, at last,—

"You can not doubt my honor?"

"No!" said she, with spirit; "if I had the slightest doubt of that, do you think you would be here? But tell me who you are, and whence you are; for I feel persuaded that the slight account of yourself with which I was contented in the excitement of our first meeting, ought not to have satisfied me."

"I told you," he said—for a sort of jealous suspicion came over his proud and susceptible heart at these words—a feeling which made him for the moment insensible to poor Margaret's situation and to the undeniable force of the duty she was performing—"I told you then, what I must repeat again, that I am a lover of art—that my name is Carteret—that my father and mother are living in Italy, and, for their rank in life, are very poor—that I have no other dependence but my father and my pencil. I might have added, with truth," he said, coloring again, as he continued, with some bitterness in his tone—"that my father is a man of education and a gentleman; but *this*, I had flattered myself, did not require to be told!"

His manner affected her; yet there was something in this speech that sounded to her equivocal.

"Oh," said she, sadly, "could I think it but right to trust to my instinct! And yet if I were——"

"What would you do?" cried he, eagerly. "Would you venture to give your Angela to a poor dependent artist, and trust to his spirit and activity for making her a place in the world?"

"Would I? Oh, if it were only that! But—but," said she, struggling hard for courage, "put yourself in my place, Mr. Carteret. Ask yourself, ought what I know of you, ought your simple assurance, ought it to satisfy any friend, or any parent? Is it reasonable to expect it? is it right? Would you do it yourself?"

"My simple assurance! And is that to be doubted?"

He was firing up at this. Then he recollected himself, and said more quietly—

"I forgot—I beg your pardon; I thought you had perhaps felt some esteem for me as a man. But I have had little opportunity of showing myself. I ought to have remembered that!" he added, in a tone of despondency.

"And so I would—so I do—so we both do!" cried she, earnestly. "But why, why this mystery? I feel that there is a mystery! Oh, why will you not satisfy me?"

He looked excessively perplexed, but was silent. He was evidently, she saw, in great agitation of mind; but he did not at once rebut the charge of a mystery, as she had hoped he would have done, by a full explanation. He sat there before her, looking (it was impossible to look more) chagrined and uneasy.

She watched his countenance anxiously. There was nothing of shame, nothing of the confusion of one detected in wrong in it, certainly nothing of the agitation of one in danger of having some shameful secret betrayed. There was extreme perplexity, but nothing else. She felt comforted by a sort of internal certainty that there was nothing greatly wrong to be disclosed.

Had it been herself, I firmly believe, such was her confidence in him in spite of all, she would have pledged her faith without hesitation; but Angela was concerned. The words, "Would her father, do you think—?" still rang in her ears. She forced herself to be cautious and reserved.

He sat for so long a time silent—for he really could not make up his mind what to say—that at last she took courage and spoke again.

"Well, Mr. Carteret, what am I to understand?"

"Understand nothing," said he, now raising his eyes from the ground upon which they had been fixed in deep meditation; "understand nothing. Give me till to-morrow to consider what I must do; I hope then to be able to give you all the satisfaction you can desire. After our long—I was going to say, but I mean short—yet,

as I hoped, sincere friendship," he added, rather coldly, "is it too much to ask that you will wait till to-morrow before you dismiss me? I have a feeling, a presentiment—I know not what," said he, putting his hand to his brow which was now burning, "that the event of to-morrow may be decisive of my life, for weal or for woe. I would fain pass this one evening here in peace. You promised me that I should hear Angela sing the 'Agnus Dei.' I feel as if I could not go away without hearing it. I want to have her memory impressed *here*—associated with what is sweet and soothing, not with my painful disappointment in you. I want consolation, Margaret. Do not, do not refuse what is perhaps a last request."

"I can refuse you nothing, who have been so very, very kind to me," faltered she, with tears. "I beseech you do not be angry or hurt at me. And oh! why, why should the explanation I seek, and ought to seek—why should it not be the herald of happiness to us all?"

"It may be—it ought to be—it will be, I hope," said he, trying to rally his spirits.

But he was sorely, sorely disappointed at the turn things had taken.

He would not, however, make up his mind to abandon his plan without a struggle; so he made up his mind to take this night for consideration, and to endeavor to hit upon a scheme which might reconcile all difficulties.

But this evening with Angela, which, after the confession of his passion, he expected to have been one of such unmixed felicity, though now so painfully clouded, he could not persuade himself to give up.

He took Margaret's last speech as a permission to stay; and then, quite unequal to bear more, he rose up, and walking to the other side of the orchard, paced slowly up and down under the hedge-row trees.

"Agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi."

Slowly, sweetly, solemnly rose the strain.

The emotion of the evening was still trembling in her voice, which was richer, sweeter, fuller than ever, and possessed that exquisite feeling—that feeling which so rarely, rarely is to be found in song; but which, when found, electrifies the world, and thrills to the heart of even the most insensible.

Such feeling as some rare artists have known how to express, while to others, though greatly exalting, it is a secret denied.

That feeling which no art can acquire, no imitation bestow.

This Angela possessed in a supreme degree.

He sat upon the steps listening, his face covered with his hands, shedding tears thick and fast.

When she had done he rose from his seat, took both her hands in one of his, put his arm round her waist, and, regardless of Margaret's reproving looks, drew her on, and made her sit down upon the steps by his side.

He did not say one word, but he kissed her hands several times.

And his tears fell upon them, his abundant tears.

Laugh not at those tears! Wait till you can feel the influence of an honest, heartfelt passion, and then laugh at your own tears.

She, still almost a child, and ignorant of what had passed with Margaret, sat there looking at him with a sort of wondering tenderness. Then he let go her hands, and passing her arm through his, said—

“ You must walk with me under the trees a little, for the moon is very, very beautiful to-night.”

And she walked with him there.

He seemed perfectly overcome with melancholy. It was strange; he could not account for it himself. Why should it be so? Why should he feel so full of sad forebodings?

He had counted so securely upon making her his before his secret was disclosed, that the difficulties into which he was thrown came upon him quite unexpectedly. Yet he was not a man of a weak, desponding temper; he was accustomed to meet crosses and disappointments with resolution. Why thus entirely overcome?

“ Angela,” he said, and he took a ring from his finger and placed it upon hers, “ keep this for my sake. I had hoped, my love, to have made you mine in the course of a few, a very few weeks—nay, I still hope so. But I know not what ails me; I am in low spirits this evening. This night should have been the happiest of my life. Promise me, my love, whatever happens, to remain true to me, as I will remain true to you so long as life is granted me—to abide in the faith of a heart that will never, never betray you. And now it is late—I must go away; I shall be here again early to-morrow. Farewell, sweet, sweet girl! One kiss, my own, my betrothed, before we part.”

And he again pressed his lips upon her forehead, again pressed her to his heart; and then, slowly turning away with lingering steps, and often turning back, as if to take a last look, he at length vanished behind the trees of the garden.

His last words seem to show a despondency with regard to the future, which is scarcely to be accounted for.

But he had, indeed, been bitterly disappointed. Any difficulty upon the part of Margaret, so long as he preserved his assumed character, he had not in the slightest degree calculated upon; and how to obviate her difficulties seemed a question impossible to resolve, unless by the open discovery of himself.

But this, which seemed such a plain, easy course at the first blush, would prove, he felt convinced the more he reflected on it, the death blow to his hopes. The spirit and firmness which Margaret had displayed, and the courage and resolution which, young as she was, formed a part of Angela's character, satisfied him that to propose a clandestine marriage, a marriage without his parents' consent, would be to offend them deeply. That his parents ever would be brought to consent—though, as I said before, they might be brought to forgive—he knew was scarcely within the verge of possibility.

His perplexity, his mortification at the dilemma in which he found himself, are not to be expressed; they could be equaled only by what had been, as he now thought, his vain confidence in success.

Of one thing, however, he was certain, of one consolation nothing could deprive him—Angela loved him, loved him for himself—truly, fondly loved him; and to one conclusion he at length arrived, and in that found rest—that happen what would, blow high, blow low, to her he would be constant; that no persuasions, no threats, no tears—and of these he knew there would be abundance—should have power to move him. His determination was unshaken; he would make Angela his wife.

The irrevocable words once spoken, a declaration made and faith exchanged, it is remarkable how much solemnity, how much substance, if I may use the expression, attaches to that love—which was a short instant before but a sweet vision. That becomes real, sacred, the most sacred and important part of life which before seemed but some delightful, unsubstantial dream.

So it was now with him.

These few hours had changed the whole character of his existence; he looked upon himself as the espoused of Angela, and as if his first duties were toward her.

CHAPTER XV.

Oh how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day !

SHAKESPEARE.

HE went away oppressed with a sort of melancholy foreboding ; and he left her serious, but with a heart overflowing with happy and grateful feelings.

Perfectly inexperienced in that life of the passions into which she had so suddenly been ushered, she was hardly aware of his strange melancholy ; his tears and his tenderness, his broken phrases and his last embrace, appeared to her but as the natural expression of sentiments which in herself seemed to love to betray themselves rather by a tearful softness (than which heaven itself, she thought, could offer nothing more delightful) than in exuberant spirits or exulting joy.

She had not the slightest apprehension for the future, for she had the most perfect confidence in her lover's good faith, and so simple and laborious was the life she was now leading—so difficult was the life in prospect before her, that for her all those perplexities of arrangement as to future views, which so often disturb the love engagements of the affluent, had no existence.

With him every thing must be easier than without him. That they must both labor for their bread she knew, as she thought, well ; but to labor with him and for him, to meet the strife of life supported by his love and protected by his power—oh, how had the scene changed !

As for those expressions of his which sometimes seemed mysterious, in truth, she had given little heed to them, and the avowal of his love was all in all to her. The new position she already held as his betrothed bride threw her into such a sweet confusion of thought that there was room for nothing else. All she knew or cared for was, that they were certainly to meet again early to-morrow.

So she came in from the garden and entered the room where Margaret was still lying on her couch, though it was later than usual, for Margaret would not be persuaded to go up stairs till Angela came in.

She entered, her head bent down, but her cheek bright, and her eye glistening, her arms folded over her bosom, looking so lovely.

Sweet Psyche!

I will not attempt to describe her.

Margaret looked at her with much love, much tenderness, much sympathy, and all that gentle pity with which those who have tasted of these brightest joys of existence, and known how brief, how transient—more transient than the shining dew-drops of the morning—they are such—that gentle, tender pity, which fills the heart of those who have loved and suffered too, as they look upon these young and trusting creatures in the first sweet ecstasy: but she did not speak.

Angela was silent too, but she came up, kneeled down by Margaret, took her poor wasted hand, pressed it affectionately, and hid her face against the shawl which covered her.

Margaret laid her kind hand upon that bended head.

“May the God you serve, bless you, my Angela!—and grant you your dearest wishes—if it be His will, and if it be for your best happiness, my love.”

Angela raised her head now, pressed Margaret's hand, and looked into her face with such a sweet blissful, confiding serenity, that Margaret felt the tears of mingled anxiety and gratitude fill her eyes.

“Ah, my foolish, foolish Angela!” said she fondly, but with a tender sadness, “is it so?”

“Do you love him so very, very much already?” thought she to herself. “Oh that to-morrow were but come!”

Angela only bent down and kissed Margaret's hand again; her heart was quite too full, at first, for speech.

When she found words, the first she uttered were,

“And such a friend for you and the children!”

Yes, all her perplexities, all her anxieties, were at once dispelled; shielded by his affection, the darkness of that threatening future which lowered so heavily before her was dispelled—the curtain had drawn up, and the prospect was all bright beyond.

Voice once found, words flowed rapidly.

Blushing, smiling—now hiding her face, now looking with all the bright sunshine of joy upon her countenance into Margaret's, she poured forth the feelings of her young and exquisitely happy heart. What plans for the future!—what a life of simple enjoyment!—how much truthful affection!—how much lively anticipation!—how much generous purpose!—how much gratitude to God!—how much love

for those loved before!—what a fresh glow of being, were poured out in sweet disorder before the poor Margaret, who, looking upon her with her tender, anxious eyes, tried vainly to smother her sighs.

Angela was so full of her own thoughts that she did not, at first, observe what Margaret strove hard to conceal; at last, interrupting herself, she said,

“But you do not look so happy as I am, dear Margaret!”

“Alas, my love!” said the tender friend, gently, “do not trouble yourself about me. Age and experience subdue us to quiet, even in the happiest hours. And then, my dear love, I do not know whether I ought to interrupt the happiness of this evening by saying it——”

“And yet, to see her go on in this perfect undoubted confidence, can it be right?” asked she of herself. “Am I not adding error to error?”

“My dear love, my dear Angela, those who have known how full of disappointment life is can not—it is impossible they can—enter into this fullness of satisfaction. And then, my dear,” looking at her with a hesitating, anxious expression, “has it never, never once crossed your thoughts, how little we really know of this young man?”

“Little we really know, Margaret! I feel as if I knew him better than any one else in the world. I can not believe that it is so short a time since we first met; it seems to me as if my affection for him, or his for me, knew no time. I could believe I *have* ever, as I *shall* ever, love him.”

Sweet Angela! and such is, in truth, the mysterious infinity of real love!

Margaret looked at her, and sighed again.

“Yes, my love, I understand you quite; I know well that feeling, Angela; I have felt it too.”

“Dear Margaret!”

And she pressed the hand which she still held.

“But, my dear, I was thinking of knowing in a different view rather—knowing *who* he was; what was his real condition in life, his friends, his connections.”

“What does all that signify? We know *him*,” said Angela.

“Perhaps we do not altogether know *him*. We know neither the life he has led, nor, indeed, the life he is leading; why he is so strangely out of the way—whether any thing wrong——”

“You may not know, Margaret,” said Angela, suddenly dropping

her hand, "but I do. Wrong! No, I would pledge my life there was nothing wrong."

Margaret looked at her sorrowfully; but the greater the undoubting confidence of Angela, the more she thought it imperatively her duty to endeavor to open her eyes.

"I believe as you do, my dear," said she, gently. "I think, however, that I do and can firmly believe as you do; but my firm belief proves nothing, and, in an affair of this importance, where all your worldly happiness is at stake, can I be too distrustful, too wary, my Angela?"

"Yes, a great, great deal. And now I understand some of Mr. Carteret's dark speeches, and his melancholy after he had talked with you, as if any one who knew him as we have done ought to doubt him for an instant. No wonder he was hurt! Why, Margaret, what is there, after all, to tell? Did he represent himself as better than he is? Did he not say his parents were poor, and that he was an artist? But he is evidently no common artist, no common man; and what am I that I should require more?"

"Oh, Carteret, Carteret!" murmured she, in her inner heart, as she turned a little away, but she did not vent this in words, "were you the poorest of human beings, fallen into the lowest condition of human life, I should be blest, be exalted, by your love."

She had felt angry, but Angela was, indeed, of a temper which "carries anger as the flint bears fire;" it was not two seconds before she had again turned to Margaret, had again taken her hand, and had said,

"Forgive me, kind, kind friend; but I feel as if I could not bear to have the slightest shadow of distrust thrown upon him: it seems to me cruel and unjust. But it is I who am unjust to your tender care for me, my more than mother. But see, how pale and faint you look! and it is so late—eleven o'clock, I protest!" as the clock struck. "You ought to have been in bed these two hours! How very, very selfish I have been!"

"Don't be uneasy about me," she added, with a sweet trusting smile, seeing the expression of perplexity and uneasiness in Margaret's countenance. "Don't be anxious about me. Ah, if we had no other ground for anxiety than Mr. Carteret's truth! Don't, don't, sweet mother. There, that's right; you look more comfortable now."

She felt so; the confidence of Angela restored her own, and the distrusts inspired by Nurse gave way. "At all events," thought she, "we will wait till the morning."

And she fell asleep, satisfied with this conclusion, and quite impressed with a certainty that the morning explanation would justify her child's confidence.

If I venture, in these slight fictitious pages, to bring forward the awful subject of religion, in its relations with the human character, it is not without many hesitations and scruples.

To speak, in a fiction, of that dread reality may appear irreverent and out of place—might seem even to evince something of that dreamy, imaginative view of the subject which, with many, is substituted for the intense sense of its truth—its living truth, which ought to belong to every rational being; but when I reflect how vital, how important, how vast a part religion makes in every human soul—how much it affects every human life and influences every human character, whether as believed or even as disbelieved—for, created as we are for it, no one can altogether escape its influence—it appeared to me that to attempt, as some from the very best motives have done, to omit a reference to the subject in works of this description, was necessarily to present a very maimed, imperfect, and most unreal picture of human feelings—a picture equally dangerous and false: for nothing, as I believe, can be more fatal or more dangerously false than to accustom the mind by such representations to consider the ordinary course of human life as a thing apart from this great subject, or as what could be carried on independently of it. The actual experience of every infidel, or even atheist, would, I am firmly persuaded, prove the contrary; the life of every man who retains a shadow of belief denies it.

I have, therefore, trusting in the mercy of the great Father of us all to forgive me if I do amiss, ventured to touch upon these great realities in describing the workings of an imaginary soul—I humbly hope for good.

For wo is me if, in mingling such dread truths with visions of my fancy, I strengthen, in the slightest degree, that but too common error, that most dangerous and fallacious habit of regarding these awful truths *something as we regard poetic visions*.

Forgive this solemn preface. The Old Man is sinking into years, and life is beginning to cast off its exterior forms, its anxious cares, its vain hopes, its intense affections; other, and deeper, and more serious views of things succeed, and, as they succeed, a more trembling fear to do wrong, to impede any human soul in its true progress, arises with them.

The young, strenuous, generous, devoted character whose secret

workings I am attempting to display, was grounded, rooted, built up, nourished upon religion.

And firmly do I believe that nothing but that strong sense of religion, that pure, child-like faith, which in youth is so deeply earnest and so greatly needed, could have enabled her to meet, as meet she did, the struggle that lay before her.

This night behold her kneeling in her little room, her great happiness still rendered greater by the deep loving gratitude with which she is reviewing it; she is pouring out her heart before the great Father of all things, and rendering thanks for his goodness and his providence. She troubles not herself with vain metaphysical inquiries into the nature of those relations into which it is utterly impossible for man to penetrate—she troubles herself not with the how or the where—she has her Saviour's word for it, not a sparrow falls, not even one hair of the head, "without your Father."

Father!

She remembers her own father—his tender care, his deep solicitude for her welfare, and she is allowed to call God Father; she is invited to carry all her troubles, wants, and cares to Him; and shall she not offer her thanks and praises for the privilege? Warm and glowing her feelings have been upon the occurrence of any little joyful event; but what are they now?—her heart seems too full to contain them.

You must realize, to its full extent, her forlorn and helpless situation, to imagine, even faintly, the rest, the repose, the relief, of feeling herself protected and safe under the care of one she loved and trusted so entirely.

See her now standing at her little window, her eyes wandering amid the pathless depths of heaven—amid the dazzling stars, bright and effulgent, on that calm and beautiful night—bathing her soul, as it were, in a sea of joy and thankfulness.

She slept so sweetly! She rose in the morning looking more than ever lovely.

CHAPTER XVI.

Didst thou but know how pale I sat at home,
My eyes still turn'd the way thou wert to come!

VERNON.

It was impossible to sleep after six o'clock. She was up soon after sunrise. He would come to breakfast, she was certain: there were fruit and flowers to be gathered and arranged.

You may see her there in the garden, gathering of the sweetest and best. Her little breakfast table is soon prepared; there are plates of red and white currants, and red and white raspberries, and they are strewed all over with sweet peas, roses, and mignonette: it is fanciful, but very pretty. There is a glass jug full of milk—one of the few little elegances Margaret possesses; the tea-things are set out, and her chair and his, and two chairs for the children, for they must all breakfast together. He is no stranger guest now. "As it is to-day, so it will soon be every day," says her heart.

She goes to Margaret's door to listen—all is quiet. Margaret, she fears, has had a bad night, for Nurse has not come out yet; so she goes to help Biddy to dress the children. They must be very nice this morning.

She is rather fluttered and in a hurry, poor, dear Angela! She is sadly afraid that he may come before the children are all ready. She wants to have the children with her in the sitting-room before he comes in, for she does not know quite how she shall look if he should come before Margaret is down, and find her alone.

She leaves the children, and goes to her own room to put on her dress and her clean muslin apron and collar. She must go by Margaret's door—every thing was very still there.

Poor little children! It has struck nine, and that cruel Angela has not yet given them their breakfast. They have had a little bread and milk, it is true, but now they are sitting on their little chairs, ringing with their spoons against their plates, wondering when Mr. Carteret will come, and they shall have their share of milk and ripe currants.

Such a treat to them, simple little things!

"Angela! Angela! do give us some breakfast."

She was standing upon the steps.

"Directly, my loves." She hears the garden-gate open. "Directly, my darlings"—hurrying in, and sitting down in haste at the head of her little table; afraid she ought not to have seemed waiting for him. She began, with a shaking hand, to help out the currants, and to pull them for the impatient little ones.

A step approaches, and her heart beats fast, and her hands shake—and her color will come, and the spoonful of currants is tumbled all over her neat white table-cloth.

But he does not come up the steps, so she looks up.

It is only an old gardener that comes in to look after the fruit-trees now and then.

"Did he say he would come to breakfast? I thought he did," said she to herself, looking at the clock; "but I must have mistaken him. It was all such a hurry and confusion last night. He never has come so early as this. I dare say, nay, I have heard him say it is a long walk. I should not like him to think I had waited for him."

"Make haste, my loves, and finish; I want to clear away."

She drank a cup of tea, and then she hurried away the tea-things, cleared away the table herself, and set out her drawing. But it was quite impossible to draw.

Nurse at last made her appearance.

"Oh, Nurse, how is she? I thought you never—never would come down! I am afraid she has had a bad night."

"She was sure to have a bad night," growled Nurse, "after sitting up till eleven o'clock, as she did; and now she ought to lie quiet, and try to get a little doze: but she won't do that. She's as obstinate as a mule this morning, and insists upon getting up and coming down. It will be as good as the death of her, I tell you, Miss Angela."

"Shall I go and try to persuade her to lie still?" cried Angela, rising hastily.

"What's the use of that? I've done all I can—you'll only worry her; and, besides, the more she sees you the more she'll come. It's all a-concerning you, as I expect. But you'll see the consequences—mark my words!"

Even this could not annoy Angela much at this moment. She felt the absolute necessity of Margaret being with her that morning—she should have double rest afterward; besides, she was certain that the rest of the spirit which must be hers when this day of excitement was once over, and all happily settled, would more than repay her for every extra exertion.

So she said nothing more except to inquire about Margaret's breakfast, in the preparation of which she soon busied herself.

She found this little effort much more possible than the attempt at drawing; and so she passed away another hour.

It struck ten.

She hoped now that he would not come till Margaret was comfortably down stairs, all the little bustle of getting her upon the sofa over, and Nurse, with her cross ways, dismissed.

She was, as I said, never allowed to go into Margaret's sleeping-room; but she watched impatiently at the foot of the stairs, thinking she would never come down.

Then she remembered luncheon. He must have something, at all events, when he comes in; he would be so tired.

The arranging a little luncheon of fruit and bread filled, happily enough, the remainder of the hour.

As it struck eleven, Margaret, supported by Nurse, entered the room.

Very weak, very faint, very ill she looked.

Angela flew to her to support her.

"Rest your head upon my shoulder," as, in defiance of Nurse's angry looks, she held her in her arms, almost carried her to her couch, and hung tenderly over her. "Oh, my Margaret! this is your worry about me. How bad your cough is! it seems worse than ever."

"She's done nothing but cough all night," said Nurse, gruffly.

"Oh, but she'll be better soon!" said Angela, bending over her so affectionately, and looking so happy, yet so tender, that nothing could be sweeter. "You'll be better soon; won't you, Margaret? See," said she, as Nurse retreated—"see how considerate of propriety he is, dear mother—sweet, young, prudent mamma," caressing her. "You see he would not come till he was sure you would be down stairs. Was not that right?"

But Margaret looked very ill and suffering; nothing seemed to soothe her; she tried to smile, but she could not.

The exertion of coming down after her bad night and the excitement of the previous day, had produced so much increase of illness that not all her fortitude could support her. She sank back fainting upon the pillow.

In this dreadful state of bodily exhaustion all moral power is so completely lost, that the interest in external things is, for the moment, quite deadened.

Margaret seemed insensible to the intense interest of the morning.

It was not till some cordials had been administered, and she had reposed for about half an hour, that she was sufficiently recovered to open her eyes, and she looked at Angela to inquire what o'clock it was, and whether he was come.

"Half-past twelve!" said Angela with astonishment, looking at the clock. "I could not have conceived it possible—so late!"

"When did he say he would come?" asked Margaret, after the silence of another half hour.

"I don't know—I can not quite recollect," said Angela, who was now red, now pale, and whose heart beat so fast that she felt quite sick.

"Go and take a turn in the orchard, my dear," said Margaret; "you want a little air—you will not be seen from the road." But she knew that from one point in that orchard walk she could see a good way up the road herself.

Angela went into the orchard. She wanted to be alone.

Her heart, as on all occasions of distress and terror, was beginning to call upon God.

At one o'clock the children, hungry as little hounds, came in from their walk, calling out for their dinner.

The untouched luncheon of fruit stood upon the table. She had quite forgotten their dinner.

The poor little things became fretful, and began to cry with disappointment.

"Be quiet, children, do!—do be quiet!" cried Angela, more impatiently than she had ever been known to speak before. "I quite forgot how late it was; and Nurse is asleep, and forgot too. Do—do be good, for Heaven's sake, Tommy! do give over roaring!"

"I want my dinner!"

Nothing can pacify the cry of hunger in a child.

Happy thus far, at least, that as yet she had wherewithal to satisfy it.

These children were not accustomed to luxuries. There was soon cold meat and bread set for them, and she gave them the fruit instead of pudding; so they were more than contented. And then she went and sat down upon the steps where she had sat last night, his arm round her waist, gazing at the stars, and thanking God.

And there she laid her face upon her knees and listened, as if she would penetrate the depths of silence for his step. But no step came.

When the clock struck three, and not till then, she roused herself, re-entered the room, and came to Margaret.

Her face was very pale, and her eyes glazed.

She said nothing, but sat down and took hold of her friend's hand.

Neither could Margaret speak.

They sat in mute expectation, holding each other's hands. It struck four, and then five.

And, without saying a word, Angela rose up and prepared for tea. She had quite forgotten every thing—all her little duties and employments, in the expectation that every succeeding five minutes would bring him.

Shocked at her forgetfulness, she now hastily rose to get Margaret's tea.

"Something has delayed him," said Margaret, in a tone which endeavored to appear cheerful. "He will either come or write, you may be quite sure, Angela. I have no doubt of it."

The young girl said nothing; but she looked deathly pale. Her heart told her that something extraordinary must have happened to account for this delay. She began to be terrified at she knew not what.

She sat upon the steps, with her face bowed upon her knees—
Listening.

Margaret, also, as hour after hour rolled on, and still he did not appear—as the sun, with a glorious golden and crimson light bursting forth from beneath a dark, threatening cloud, sank behind the distant trees—as the stars came twinkling forth—as the curfew, which still in that remote village sounded, was rung—as gradually the rural sounds of labor subsided, and every thing was hushed into profound stillness. Still as that silent chamber where she lay extended, breathing with difficulty.

Margaret, also, began to feel a cold chill creeping over her spirits. She did not, like Angela, with a perturbed soul anticipate some strange and horrible event; but what was, perhaps, more painful, her suspicions that all was not as it should be—that there was a mystery which could not be explained, hidden under his strange, unaccountable behavior—that there was wrong somewhere—her conviction of this grew stronger and stronger every hour.

She now recollected perfectly that he had promised to be with her early in the morning, and then to satisfy her doubts—and he had neither come nor sent.

Very far off, beyond a walk, at least, his lodging could not possibly

be situated. Surely, if any unforeseen accident had prevented him coming, he might have sent.

At last it struck ten.

Then Angela got up from her seat upon the steps, and coming up to Margaret, with a look in which emotion and disappointment were struggling against a determination to be calm, she said,—

“My dear Margaret, I forget every thing to-day—pray, forgive me. You must go to bed. Sleep to-night for my sake. We shall hear of him to-morrow—I am sure we shall. It would be less painful to me to bear this uncertainty, if I could see you satisfied as to *him*. Only believe *me*—I am as certain as that I stand here that Carteret is *true*!”

“Heaven grant it so!” was all Margaret could say, bowing her head.

CHAPTER XVII.

Yes, there are real mourners—I have seen a fair, sad girl, mild, suffering, and serene.

CRABBE.

O THOU who hast been the guide of my youth, the strength of my early years, the rock on which I trust, forsake me not now!

Three weeks have elapsed—three weeks of a suffering almost too horrible to describe.

Three weeks! and not the slightest sign of his existence given.

He has vanished from before their eyes as if he had never been; but the light he had shed during his brief transit, had rendered the succeeding darkness more frightful.

An Egyptian darkness, which might be felt.

Not one single syllable, not one single trace by which to follow him, or obtain the least intelligence of him. He had vanished like a dream. No one about the farm had the slightest idea whence he came, or knew any thing whatever about him. Mrs. Whitwell shrugged her shoulders, and wondered whether he had borrowed any money from the ladies—was glad he hadn't asked her husband, though she hoped Whitwell knew better what he was about now with artists—burnt child dreads the fire—and so on.

Nurse, who was of a suspicious temper, and always thought the worst of every thing and every body, began to harbor the most injurious thoughts.

Margaret was in an agony of suspense, fear, and unwilling distrust.

Angela alone had no doubts.

The slightest suspicion against his sincerity and truth had not once—no, not once crossed her mind. She could as soon have doubted her own existence as his good faith. She thought she knew him better than the rest; and she certainly had possessed better opportunities of judging him justly.

She was persuaded that nothing but death could have thus suddenly and completely terminated their intercourse.

The suspense was frightful.

For some days she would be walking for hours in the garden, which overlooked the road, watching every person who went up to the farm, fancying she saw the messenger who should bring intelligence of some dreadful catastrophe.

But no one brought any news.

Nothing dreadful seemed to have happened in the neighborhood; there was no rumor of accident or disaster.

She would wander in those fields near the house, where she had met him at the time of the attack from the bull—those fields over which she knew he was accustomed to come.

In vain! there was not the slightest trace of him.

As her hopes of receiving intelligence by some accidental means died away, she wandered still farther and farther into the labyrinth of fields and hedges behind the house, pursuing the different foot-paths in various directions, equally in vain: they mostly terminated in distant solitary farm-houses, or lost themselves in woods, or ended in the great high-roads.

Still no trace of him.

There were a few cattle-ponds in these fields. Could he, the night he left her, have missed his way and have fallen into any one of these? But was it possible that such an event could have happened, without the persons with whom he lodged being alarmed at his sudden disappearance, and their having made inquiries the country round for him; and then, his steps being traced, would not some intelligence of his fate have reached them?

Was it possible that he could have visited the farm every day for three weeks, and no one where he lodged have been in the least degree aware of it?

She could not, of course, walk many miles in any direction; and, indeed, she was so persuaded that he lived pretty near them, that she did not attempt to go beyond a certain distance. She employed herself rather in visiting and revisiting this labyrinth of fields and hedges—searching every hedge, and ditch, and pond, that lay near, endeavoring to trace his footsteps in the soft earth, than in extending her researches further.—a matter, as the circle extended, which would indeed have been a hopeless task. So she never actually reached the brow of the last hill which commanded a view of his father's castle; and even had she, that would have been the very last place in which she would have thought of inquiring for him.

The castle was, indeed, so far from the farm, and the little village to which the farm belonged so secluded and so insignificant a place, that its very existence was unknown at Sherington; which accounts for there not being the slightest communication between the two places upon this occasion.

Thus these terrible three weeks of agitation, restless search, hope of the morning and despair of the night, had passed, she knew not how.

At last came the awakening hour.

He was gone, and she should see him never more.

And she turned to God.

She bent her head, like the patriarch of old, this young and patient creature, and worshiped.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

She had strength to say it.

It was a terrible night of agony and struggle, that night upon which she finally abandoned hope, and resolved with herself to return to the duties of her daily life, and forget her short vision of joy.

She did indeed wrestle in prayer that night, and those who have so done alone know the force and truth of that expression. She finally prevailed. She came down that next morning firm and composed; and from that day she mentioned his name no more.

She gave herself entirely to the task of attending upon Margaret, who was now getting rapidly worse, and of providing for the wants of the children, which were now becoming terribly pressing.

Her three weeks' abstraction had thrown her little affairs into great confusion. She forgave herself for this; she alone knew how impossible it would have been to have done otherwise; but now she set herself strenuously to endeavor at repairing the evil.

The disease under which poor Margaret labored had, indeed, during this agitating interval, been making rapid advances.

Deprived suddenly of all that support and nourishment which the care and assiduity of Carteret had supplied, and her mind at the same time torn by the most agitating feelings, the improvement which had once held forth such flattering hopes of ultimate recovery was at once stopped, and the disease seemed gathering strength every day.

Those dreadful symptoms, which had given but too certain warning of her fate, returned with increased force, and she felt that she must shortly prepare to depart.

The separation which Nurse had effected, and which she now more than ever most rigidly maintained—the exclusion of Angela from her friend's bedchamber, hid these aggravated symptoms for some time from her observation: the sufferings of the night and the increased horrors of the morning were carefully concealed from her.

Margaret, so full of tender sympathy for others, so patient and submissive for herself, regarded the burden already laid upon this young heart as more than sufficient for its strength, and exerted herself in every way to conceal the increased illness which she knew would occasion Angela so much distress.

In the agitation, in the absorption of thought, in the energy of searching, in the alternations of hope and despair which lasted during the first three weeks, Margaret had found the task of concealment easy; but now that Angela had made the struggle with herself—had broken, as it were, her connection with this visionary past, and had returned to devote her whole attention and all her powers of body and mind to the task before her, it was in vain longer to dissemble.

Two days had not elapsed before she was aware of the fatal truth. Margaret was growing rapidly weaker and weaker, her disease was advancing with giant strides.

It was a sore struggle, unaided as she now was, to provide the means to procure the little delicacies and comforts more than ever necessary; but provided they must be. Angela had to labor night and day.

Often and often at midnight she might have been seen, sitting in that large gloomy room alone, still plying her task by the light of a small tallow candle, when all around her was perfectly still,—the chamber of the invalid long closed, the children and their little nurse fast asleep, all the busy labors of the farm suspended, every thing profoundly silent.

They would have been dangerous hours these for a less constant heart.

As the work passed through her wearied fingers—as her head began to grow confused with unceasing toil—as every limb was aching with fatigue—when every earthly support seemed withdrawn, and she left utterly alone to her regrets,—it was a hard trial for only nineteen.

But she spent the time well.

Simply—as a child might have done; but not all the wisdom of the world could have taught her to employ it better.

There is this blessing in unhappiness: we come with more undoubting confidence to our heavenly Father—the suffering and the sorrowful, the mourner and the sorely tried and tempted, cast themselves upon Him with a stronger faith.

And she found it so. She had loved Him with all her heart, with all her strength, and with all her might; but she knew not the greatness of her trust until now.

With perfect submission and patience, she had accepted the cup presented. She never once thought of murmuring; she never rebelled and said it was *hard*.

She knew well, that what was offered to her would never be found too hard if met in the spirit with which it was sent.

She employed those silent hours in purifying her heart and strengthening her spirit, in confirming her faith and trust.

She never allowed herself to look forward into that dark and doubtful future which lay before her; sufficient for the day was the evil thereof.

Inestimable precept! as so many sufferers have proved.

Sufficient for the day is its own evil; and thus parted and parcelled out into portions, as it were, how much suffering may be, and is, got through! The soul, collected in itself to meet the present, and agitated by no vain inquiries into the unknown future, possesses a strength and composure which triumphs in the severest struggles; while the vain, and anxious, and faithless mind, distracted by its own anxieties, has neither attention nor energy left to meet the actual *now*.

There is no danger of the precept being mistaken.

I believe it was by a simple adherence to this and such-like rules that this young creature was able to effect so much both for herself and others.



The two friends had sat silently together for some time.

They had now reached the beginning of September, and the evenings had become unusually cold and chilly.

Coals, in that part of the country, were extremely dear, and many an additional hour had Angela plied her needle to enable her to purchase a few hundred weight.

She had taught the little ones to be useful when they could, and in their daily walks a few sticks and fir-cones were collected; with these she had just heaped up a pleasant little blazing fire. She had shut the windows and drawn the curtains. The equinoctial gales roared and whistled outside the house; but it was warm and tranquil within.

Warm and tranquil as her own good heart.

She sat by her little round work-table, busily employed in making up coarse linen into ploughmen's shirts, her needle passing rapidly through her work, and the click of her scissors, from time to time, being the only sound that broke the deep silence. except, indeed, at intervals, the short dry cough and the painful breathings of poor Margaret: but she always felt rather stronger and better at this hour of the day.

Angela thought she was dozing, she lay so still; but she was not dozing. She was lying with her bright eyes fixed upon her step-daughter, watching her as she worked.

She had been wishing for some time to have a serious conversation with her; but her rapidly increasing illness had, till now, prevented this. But she felt more equal to it this evening; indeed, unusually, unaccountably well.

"I do indeed wonder at you, my Angela," at last she began.

"Do you?" said Angela, lifting up her face, now filled with a gentle gravity, which rendered its youth and beauty more than ever interesting. "I sometimes could wonder at myself, Margaret."

"What generous courage you have shown, my love! And yet, what you must have suffered!"

"I *have* suffered," said Angela, in a faltering voice; "but the worst of that is now over."

"Ah, my dear, the past, thank God, has been endured, and my precious Angela's health is still untouched; but the future, my love—the future! Have you ventured to look seriously forward to the future? I fear these are but the beginnings of sorrows, my dearest girl."

"Let the morrow take thought for the things of itself," Margaret.

I hope, and I believe, that terrible future, which I know you are thinking of, is far, far off—may perhaps never come."

"It is close at hand," said Margaret, in a hollow voice.

Angela started, turned round, looked at her. Her color and eye were bright; her breathing seemed less difficult than usual. The terror which had been excited by Margaret's words died away as she gazed.

"No, no, no!" said she, rallying her spirits; "dear, dear Margaret, you will get better yet."

"No," said Margaret, "that is a delusion; I shall never get better, and I shall soon depart. As long as I thought that hour at some distance, I thought like you. I did not wish to anticipate sorrow. I thought we would live to the present; there was nothing, indeed, else to be done. But now, my child, the consideration of some things we must delay no longer. I must talk with you, Angela, to-night. Can you bear it? I can."

Angela made no answer, but laid down her work, and came and sat down by Margaret.

"We must first speak of money," said Margaret. "The last payment for the insurance of my life was duly sent, was it not?"

"Yes," and she colored, for she recollected how hard she had been pressed to pay it—that she had borrowed a few pounds from Nurse to make up the sum, which debt yet remained undischarged.

"You will not have to pay another, my dear. This life-insurance will give you two hundred and fifty pounds; and that, with our little clothes and furniture, is every farthing there is left for you and my children. There is, indeed, a share of the D——n prize money, to which your father is entitled; but it is now between sixteen and seventeen years that it has remained undivided, and it will probably never come till all have perished who had need of it. Your father had earned his share with his life. But why do I revert to these harassing things?"

"My father looked upon it as lost," said Angela; "and he taught us to do so. He used to talk to me a good deal, the few months before he died, when we were alone. He told me what, as an officer's daughter, I had to expect; that his whole little fortune had been sunk in his commission, but that, as long as there was any hope of his life, he had been unwilling to part with it. If he died suddenly, before the sale was completed, about which he had then begun a negotiation, he told me I should be utterly penniless; and, even if completed, my portion would be so small, that I should be obliged to work for my living."

“ ‘Had I been a stock-broker, Angela,’ he would say, ‘I might have left you thousands; but a poor, wounded, crippled soldier has no resource.’ ”

“ He used to feel these things bitterly at times, I fear, my love, for our sakes, more than perhaps he ought to have done. I know not,” added Margaret, sadly, “ what right we have to complain; our fate is but the fate of numbers.”

“ He then told me,” Angela went on, “ that I must at once make up my mind to earn my bread. He used to point out the difficulties I should have to encounter, and the dangers and various temptations which I might meet with. He talked to me very openly, because he said my situation was peculiar. I do not know why it should be very peculiar either, for there are thousands of governesses working for their bread every day.”

Margaret made no observation upon this, but looked at the beautiful and talented young creature, and well understood the poor father’s anxieties.

“ I have not forgotten one syllable that he said. And he then told me to have good courage, and look my situation bravely in the face; and I try to do so.”

Margaret was silent; she was thinking of her children.

Angela understood her silence, and went on.

“ Though you have sometimes said, that I pique myself on *never* looking forward to the morrow, yet I have not been so unwise as not to lay my plans for the future, which yet—which yet— Ah, Margaret!”

“ The time is come, my dear,” said Margaret, laying her hot and wasted hand on hers.

“ You would like to hear; it will not tire you to hear my plans.”

“ Ah, my love!”

“ When—when it is all over, I shall sell all we possess here, and make as much money as I can, and then I shall pay every thing and every body: there is not much owing. Then I shall discharge Biddy, and, with Nurse and the children, I shall go to London. Nurse has a cousin living in London, and at her house we can get very cheap and respectable lodgings. And then I shall go out as a governess; and with the salary I mean to get, and the interest of what little money there is left, I shall be able to maintain our children, till they can do as I do, and maintain themselves”—

“ My child! my best, dearest, most generous child! what can I say? Alas! what ought I to say? All your hard earned pittance to go to them!”

And the tears now streamed down her cheeks.

"Dear, dear mother, don't, don't vex yourself about that; only be thankful that I am strong and well, and able to provide for us all, as I am quite sure I shall be:—I am not in the least afraid—indeed, I feel as if I should like it. I am so fond of children, and I had much better have something to do; I had, indeed, Margaret. And I should have no pleasure in toiling for myself. Who could?"

"I can never, now," she added, in a lower voice, "have any children of my own to love. I have got over it; but I am not going to try to forget it: no, no. Then, what a blessing it is to have these dear little ones belonging to me!"

Margaret could only sigh, and look at her, so strong in courage, yet so earnest and serious, too. She knew better than Angela what the pain and the difficulty of actual life is; and she wanted something of her confidence and faith, and something of her strenuous, sanguine temper. Physical suffering had by this time wasted the power of character she once possessed; but she had never possessed so much energy as her stepdaughter.

She had never been, till of late, deprived of the support of others; and, even thus protected, she had found the battle of life a fearful thing.

But she would not have discouraged her for the universe; she only pressed her hand in answer, lifted up her eyes with an expression of grateful, wondering admiration, and was silent.

The next morning Margaret was dead.



CHAPTER XVIII.

The event is now irrevocable; it remains only to bear it.

JOHNSON.

THE bell in the little church-tower tolls solemnly this fine, still September morning; and down the road between the green hedges, and through the little gateway, and up the path between these rural graves and artless monuments of the departed, the coffin of poor Margaret is carried.

Behind it walk, in mourning hoods, each holding one of the little

children by the hand, Angela and old Nurse, their handkerchiefs to their eyes, trying not to weep aloud.

She has striven to bear this, as she has borne so much before, with firmness and composure: but it is a sore struggle, as the body of her last friend sinks into the earth, and the stones rattle upon the lid, to prevent her agony giving itself vent in cries.

Margaret is laid by the side of her husband. A simple mound of turf, kept together by wicker-work, marks the spot. Angela had nothing to spend in memorials for the dead, nothing to spare for the fond longings of affection.

The funeral over, she walked home quietly with the little children, now her own; and, as she entered her deserted home, embraced and kissed them both with a mother's heart. Then she went up stairs, took off her hood, and went to fetch the baby. She took it and pressed it to her bosom, and went and walked in the garden with it slumbering in her arms, for the little creature was quiet and asleep; and so she spent that evening in meditation and prayer.

And she did not feel herself deserted.

Mrs. Whitwell at first showed a good deal of kindness upon this occasion.

In cases of this nature, the hardest and most indifferent hearts are touched. There is always immediate sympathy and immediate help for sufferers in such moments, and so far it is well.

Pity, sometimes, that such sympathy and such kind help can not last a little longer.

Nurse, too, was neither cross nor unmanageable at first; and Biddy cried a great deal, most honestly and naturally. Altogether, Angela found these first days of loneliness much more tolerable than she had expected.

She began, immediately that the funeral was over, to talk to Nurse of her future plans.

She found her a sensible and a kind adviser. The old woman was testy, suspicious, obstinate, and provoking; and when there were two sides of a question, she was very apt to take the wrong one; and that once done, to adhere to it, as the saying is, through thick and thin—deaf to argument, and perfectly incapable of comprehending reasoning.

But here two sides there were not.

Necessity was absolute, and unquestionably bread must be provided. The widow's pension had ceased with her life, and there were three little children that must not be starved.

That some means of obtaining subsistence must be found more profitable than sewing, which would not provide half the means to feed them, let her sew day and night, was plain. No place of refuge in the world had they to go to; Angela had not a relation living to whom she could apply; Margaret had been equally destitute. To afford a chance of procuring employment it was necessary to leave this solitary place, and there seemed nowhere to go but to London. Nurse's cousin was the only person they knew to whom they might apply for assistance in forwarding Angela's views, and who would afford them protection in that large, and to them awful place.

As Angela had told Margaret, she lived there, and, as it appeared, kept a small shop somewhere in Westminster, near Westminster bridge, and added to her means by letting her first floor.

Nurse wrote that very night to ask whether they could have that first floor.

This cousin had, before she married, lived as head nurse in several rich families; and Nurse hoped that, through her means, Miss Angela might hear of some respectable situation.

The next thing was to dispose of the little furniture and property they possessed.

Nurse talked of a sale by auction, saying that she was sure in those remote places things were thus got rid of to great advantage, often fetching even more than their original price. There were several bits of things, as she remarked, that the neighboring farmers' wives were sure to like; and if you once got the spirit of bidding up among them, there was no knowing what they might not give. But Mrs. Whitwell would hear of no such proceeding in her house.

The truth was, she had set her heart upon keeping the apartments in their present state, in order to tempt future lodgers, or, possibly, with the intention of at last inhabiting them herself; for the stirring Mrs. Whitwell was getting rich, in spite of her husband's unfortunate tendency to compassion. And there were several little matters connected with the ancient habits of the ladies, which, simple and inexpensive as they were, were esteemed very beautiful in this retired corner of the world.

So Mrs. Whitwell positively refused to have any thing like an auction in her house; and said they might sell their things at the village inn if they chose, or she would take them at a valuation, just as they pleased.

"It was all one to her," said Mrs. Whitwell.

But she knew they had no alternative.

To move her little property for sale to the inn would, her adviser, Nurse, declared, be quite ruinous.

"Them sort of things," as she justly observed, "looked very neat where they were, but went for nothing when once taken out of their places." And then she went into a rage against Mrs. Whitwell, for her ill-nature in not allowing a sale upon the premises; and long and loud were the altercations which thence arose.

They stood quarreling and abusing each other in Angela's presence; while she, looking scared and disgusted, was then first initiated into that atmosphere of true vulgarity which too often surrounds the rude and ignorant—the atmosphere of that world with which she now must learn to make herself acquainted.

She, gentle and refined as she was, had now to come in close contact with those ill-regulated passions, those low and sordid views, those coarse manners, and that gross language, which disfigure that ill-educated and half-civilized portion of mankind which still, alas! makes up so large a portion of every society, and which it has been, perhaps, too much the habit of mistaken philanthropists in fiction lately to disregard in their manner of writing to and about them.

It is well to recollect that mobs may be flattered as well as princes, and that a great deal of judicious—nay, stern—moral discipline, as well as great kindness, is what, in the endeavor to benefit them, is most particularly required.

And that upon this principle, as one instance, was our new Poor-Law framed; a principle which, it is to be hoped, will never be abandoned, for the best of principles it surely is, let some mistaken philanthropists say what they will about it.

Our pleasant friend, Paddy, has been upon the verge of being ruined by such negligent indulgence; and if people do not look carefully to it, instead of being disciplined into a good, industrious, merry, happy fellow, as he ought to be, he is in danger more than ever of sinking into a lounging, idle, and worse than idle, savage.

It was a great trial throughout the whole of Angela's painful course to find herself exposed to this rude, unrestrained coarseness, in so many with whom she had intimately to do.

Now the Old Man is not going to sit down with the imputation that he is fond of the aristocracy, and can see no merit in any among the lower orders; all his recitals refute the charge. Merit and goodness are of all conditions; vulgarity and meanness may be found every where: but it would be strangely contradictory not to suppose—it would be to refuse all benefit to gentle culture to deny—that the lower you descend in the scale of society the more these faults

must and will abound ; and that, therefore, in his dealings with these classes, measures must be taken accordingly.

It would be difficult to say whether poor Angela suffered more from Mrs. Whitwell's rude and selfish disregard of all her feelings and wishes, or from Nurse's violent and abusive manner of taking her part.

There was, in short, a battle royal between these two good women ; for, when once they had passed the bounds of self-restraint and propriety, the lengths to which they went were really astonishing.

In vain Angela endeavored to silence Nurse, and to quiet Mrs. Whitwell, who at last began threatening to turn them all out of her house, neck and heels, for their impudence.

At last Nurse, fairly tired out by her own violence—for we know she was old, and not very strong—seemed not sorry to make a drawn battle of it ; and upon Biddy entering and calling her away upon some business or other, she retreated, leaving Angela and Mrs. Whitwell to settle the matter as they could.

Angela then gently said that she was sorry Nurse had been so violent, for unquestionably Mrs. Whitwell was at perfect liberty to do what she thought best upon the subject.

“ Much obliged to you, miss, for the permission ! ” was the answer, with a toss of the head. “ I suppose every body knows that, without such a clever young lady as you being found ready to learn it them. Do what I like best with my own ! I should suppose so ! ”

“ Well, Mrs. Whitwell, so I said.”

“ Yes, yes, said ! when that scold of an old woman has been black-guarding me for an hour, and you standing by ! But I'll tell you what, Miss Nevil, or Miss Angela, I said I'd take all' your paltry goods at a valuation, but I'll have nothing to do with 'em *now*. Carry them away with you, where you like ; and as for the *when* you like, the sooner the better : for your quarter is up, and I name to-morrow ! ”

Angela was not deficient in spirit ; she had never been cowed by ill-judged severity, or more ill-judged mortification : her character had been tempered, not broken ; true courage was her peculiar attribute, and she had resolution to withstand ill treatment when necessary.

“ You must do as you please, ma'am,” she said ; “ but I am sure you are hurried now. Nurse is an excellent person, I need not remind you ; but she has a hasty temper, we all know : but I do not think, when you are a little cooler yourself, that you will feel inclined to increase the difficulties that surround me by driving me

away in this manner. As for the furniture, you said you wished to have it; it will be better for me to part with it to you than to move it down to the village for sale. You know of what consequence a little money is to me, who am so very poor; and I don't think, when you have reflected a little, you will refuse to take it at a valuation, as you almost promised, because Nurse has been rather cross and rude."

Mrs. Whitwell, who was accustomed to rage at will, and never to hear a truth from any living being, except it might be now and then from an insolent servant or so, looked perfectly amazed at this speech, coming, too, as it did from a young and delicate creature, whom she felt as if she could have blown away with a breath.

"Hurried!—cooled!—promised!"

She hesitated, she felt abashed, she did not know how to take it. Her pride refused to yield, and struggled hard for victory, but at last the more gentle and reasonable feelings prevailed.

Pride, it may be observed—ill-directed pride—exercises usually a very powerful influence over the minds of the vulgar.

Oh, what a pretender is Pride! It thinks itself the grandest thing in the world, and it is the attribute of the basest and commonest nature—*il court les rues*, literally.

But gentleness, firmness, and moderation resist and temper pride.

The better part of Mrs. Whitwell—every living being has his better part—triumphed. She was hard and selfish, but she was not downright bad. She at length consented to let Angela remain till the letter arrived from London, and consented to take the whole of her little furniture (which she had quite set her heart upon) at about half its real value—to oblige her, as she said—meaning to have the valuation made by a man selected by herself, and who dared not offend her by doing common justice to the other party.

And now, as I am rather in a humor to preach a little to-day, and as I may have said some things which may be mistaken, let me make a remark or two upon this Pride, which every one who has had to do with the inferior ranks must have observed to be such a very influential principle among them; and let me entreat every one who comes in contact with it to treat it with indulgence.

• It seems to me to have its root in ill-conceived notions of dignity—a mistaken assertion of that dignity of human nature which, God forbid! should be extinguished in any man.

To people who are dependent upon others for their bread, there must, doubtless, appear something generous and magnanimous in braving their paymasters and risking the loss of their subsistence for

the gratification of their feelings. It is, after all, a preference of the spiritual to the physical; and of this, according to their rude and imperfect instincts in these matters, they have an obscure perception. Their conscience, therefore, backs them in this self-assertion; they know they have much to lose and nothing to gain by it, and imagine they are doing, what at least in one point of view is, a noble and disinterested thing, in thus sacrificing their bread to their feelings.

I, therefore, beg of all my young pupils to consider these things, and to treat this pride (which vents itself in forms often so rude and violent) with patience and gentle firmness; not to endeavor at crushing this self-assertion by severity and mortification, but to dispel it by gentleness, and to correct it by kind and patient reasoning, endeavoring to substitute in its place that true sense of the right and the becoming, which makes man respected in every station.

I do not enlarge upon this subject; your own good hearts and cultivated understandings will sufficiently point out my meaning to you when the occasion arises.

Mrs. Whitwell had paid Angela thirty-two pounds, fourteen shillings, and three half-pence, for her little possessions; the letter had arrived from Nurse's cousin; the lodgings were hired for one guinea a-week; and thus they were provided with what they calculated, with great economy, would last them about a quarter of a year, during which time Angela must look out, and trusted to find some employment which would provide bread for the future. The few hundreds left by Margaret, it was agreed, should be placed in one of the great Companies, and would bring about four and a half per cent. per annum—something under twenty pounds.

Such were their prospects.

Nurse and Angela had now no secrets for each other; and Nurse had, indeed, at once established herself upon the footing of a friend, by refusing to receive the wages of a servant.

"No," she said, "she had lived with her poor master ever since Miss Angela was born—ay, and a sweet baby you were! and my poor little Samuel was gone to heaven: so I took you, for your poor mother was gone to the Lord two days after you saw the light, poor lamb! And I have lived among you, and cared for you, and striven for you, as if ye were my own, ever since. And now, Miss Angela, master was never a rich man, but he was a generous master to me; and, with bits of things from others—for love of the babies, and so on—I have some three hundred pounds, and it brings me in twelve

pounds a-year, more than ever I can spend. And as for my bit of meat, I'll maybe save as much as that comes to by management; and you must have somebody to look after the children. And so, Miss Angela, I'll share your roof, and I'll share your brown loaf; and as for the rest, when you're married to some lord, as I'm sure you will be, sooner or later, for your beauty, then you may remember me, if you please."

Angela had striven hard with her feelings, and had so subdued them by resignation and piety, that she had ceased to mourn, "as one without hope," over her lost-lover; but the sentiment which united her to him was of a nature the most permanent. She believed him to be dead—that she should never see him more, but, at the same time, that nothing could ever make her inconstant to his memory.

He was dead: she felt convinced he must be dead. Nothing but his death, she was certain, could account for his desertion. And, once satisfied of this, her sorrow had taken that sacred character which belongs to the last awful separation. She had to suffer from none of those painful feelings of outraged affection, of diminished esteem, of injured pride, which render an ordinary disappointment in love so full of anguish. She was patient—nay, even cheerful. She looked to another and a better place, where they should meet again. But her life, as far as this world was concerned, was, she said to herself, over. That she should ever marry another seemed to her as impossible as that the grave should restore the dead.

She was like a very young and very devoted widow: the prospect for herself, upon this side the grave, had closed. She lived for these three little children.

When Nurse talked of her marrying a lord, her heart seemed to contract, as by a momentary spasm; then she smiled gently and sadly, and said,

"My good, good, generous Nurse, to say *that* is to say that you look never to be repaid."

"Not at all," said Nurse; "more wonderful things have happened than that; and beauty, after all, when it belongs to a virtuous woman, is more precious than rubies. But it's nonsense our gossiping here—we've no time to lose. There's the rest of the things to be packed, and we're to set forward at six o'clock to-morrow. Mr. Whitwell—for I wouldn't ask that spiteful woman a favor if it was never so—has promised to lend us his spring-cart, to carry ourselves and our baggage to the coach. I never thought to see my master's daughter have to thank a farmer for the loan of his

filthy spring-cart ; but there's no help for it—beggars must not be choosers."

The remainder of that day was spent by Angela in completing her little arrangements, clearing her few debts, and arranging small presents for the servants that had been kind to her, such as her slender means would afford. Biddy was to take her leave the next morning ; Nurse had already undertaken her charge. As regarded the baby, the change was certainly an improvement. Not so for the two others : they had been accustomed to rule Biddy as they pleased ; they found old Nurse was composed of sterner stuff.

When all the arrangements were completed, and it was about five o'clock, Angela put on her shawl and bonnet, and stole out, resolved to visit her favorite haunts alone, and take leave of all those various spots rendered sacred by associations with the past.

She stole through the garden, and entered the church-yard.

It was a beautiful autumn evening ; the trees were still covered with their fading leaves, though a few had begun to fall upon and cover the graves. A few late birds were singing the dirge of the departing year, while the sinking sun threw long shadows and bright yellow lights upon the grass.

First she went to the little mound which covered the grave of her parents, and there—poor, lonely orphan!—she kneeled down. She kissed the earth that covered their resting-place ; then, as if in their presence, fervently renewed her vows to protect, cherish, and, as far as in her lay, provide for and educate their children.

This done, she returned by a little solitary path, and went toward those fields where *he* had saved her life.

There were no cattle in them now to disturb her : the long coarse grass, the scabious, and the thistle, were growing rough and harsh ; the leaves on the hawthorn hedges were withering ; the red berry hung upon the thorn—all seemed to her to have taken a dismal, wintry hue ; and the fields were silent and deserted as was her heart.

There was in this field, at no great distance from the footpath, a pond, which she knew was considered extremely deep ; it was almost covered over with water-lily leaves, and surrounded with sedges, rushes, and brambles. At a little distance, it might almost have deceived the eye into the belief that no water was there. She had always been warned to keep the children from approaching it—it was reckoned very dangerous.

It was her firm internal conviction that in this place *he* had, in some mysterious manner, perished. Often and often had she visited

it; anxiously had she endeavored to trace some vestige of his footsteps amid the reeds and sedges. There were several small breaks and fractures in the surrounding brushwood, but they were probably made by the cattle coming to drink at the pool, for the ground about was trampled over by their hoofs. But at one place the bough of a large nut-tree had been broken down, and had fallen across the water, which lay black as night, but clear as crystal beneath it. Some way or other, she had always connected this broken branch with his fate.

The place was somewhat changed since she had visited it last, for there had been bushes and thistles cut away on one side—probably, to open an easier passage for the cattle. She felt a great wish to carry away some memorial from this pond, so full of melancholy mystery; and she went to the place where the clearance had been made, resolved to try and break off a small branch from the fatal nut-tree, if she could reach it. The grass was very strong and thick at the place, but she broke through it and approached the water. As she was doing this, her foot struck against something.

She looked down: it was a very, very small book, with a golden-topped pencil fastening it. She picked it up and opened it. The book was full of diminutive sketches, made by the hand of a master: groups of trees, of cattle, of children—tiny as vignettes.

In the title-page was written, "Carteret;" below it, "Angela." The names were bound and interlaced together with the most fanciful of true-lovers' knots. Among the pages, as she turned them eagerly over, she found herself—it could not but be herself—portrayed in every possible attitude. Now she was bending over her drawing; now standing with the children in her hands: most often represented with the little baby in her arms.

There was a sketch, half finished, of her, as she sat the day before she lost him, with the great sheet upon the table.

There the history abruptly closed. No memorial recalled that last day of joy.

Her tears fell fast over the pages as she looked at them; then she gazed upon that dark, sleeping pool, in which the man she adored had sunk forever. And, oh, how she longed, as many a forlorn heart has longed before her, to plunge in to join her lover, and escape this cruel life and all its sorrows! But those little children, she could not desert them, nor could she abandon the post in which her Creator had placed her.

After a long, long time, she turned away home, carrying the little

sketch-book with her. It was almost dark when she came in, and Nurse was very cross, and scolded her roughly. This was hard to bear under her present melancholy; but great grief is very patient.

Hers was now at its climax: there could be no doubt he lay drowned there.

So many weeks had elapsed since she had lost him, that the idea which had once presented itself of endeavoring to have the pond dragged died away. The satisfaction would be a melancholy one at the best; and, besides, in her helpless situation, how should she persuade any one to attempt it? The idea of his death was, she knew, scoffed at among the inhabitants of the farmhouse. It was the universal belief there that he, like his predecessor, was little better than a common swindler, and had taken himself off in such a hurry for no very creditable reason.

In this opinion, it was plain, even Nurse joined. Angela knew it would be but vain to speak to the obstinate old woman of her own impressions, and the subject was too painful to bear discussion.

She made, therefore, only one effort. She mentioned having found Mr. Carteret's pocket-book near the broken nut-tree; but the good farmer gave little attention to her relation, merely assuring her that the tree had been broken down by the cattle long before the day Mr. Carteret had disappeared. Something she said about dragging the pool. The answer was, she might as well talk of dragging the Red Sea, for there was a hole in that pool as deep as a coal-pit; and, so saying, he turned away with the air of one resolved to listen no longer to nonsense. She was not, perhaps, sorry that to disturb his remains was thus rendered impossible. She rather loved to believe him lying in that dark, still pool, covered with the broad leaves and white virgin blossoms of the water-lilies.

CHAPTER XIX.

Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice;
Safe in His mind, whose eye discerns afar
The secret ambush of a specious prayer.

JOHNSON.

THE coach stopped at the Angel at Islington. And here, amid a noisy, brawling, bustling crowd of porters, carters, hostlers, and travelers, men, women, and children, while Nurse took care of the

little ones, who were crying with weariness and hunger, Angela stood looking after her luggage, elbowed, jostled, and pushed about, and her questions answered with all the rude, negligent insolence, with which the traveler of inferior condition finds himself, or herself—for I am sorry to say there is no difference—greeted upon these occasions.

Nothing, in fact, I am grieved to remark, can be more rough, not to say brutal, than the manners the worthy people of England too often allow themselves to adopt in such circumstances. Any thing like gentleness, or respect, to those who are for the moment in their power, they seem to think it beneath them to practice. Any thing approaching to that politeness which regards the sex—that old-fashioned politeness now rarely to be met with, except among quite old men—seems never to enter their heads. A young woman—a young lady—is hunted and pushed up and down; her soft and gentle voice, as she asks for her things, rudely answered, or more rudely disregarded. The people of England seem to have no notion of a lady out of her own carriage; no respect for timidity, gentleness, and feebleness, on a railway platform, or outside the coach.

How unlike the pleasing gallantry which used once to distinguish our neighbors toward the sex! But they, too, have forgotten their gentle manners, I fear, in a great measure now, and have learned to be as rude and rough as those English whom they dislike so much.

How painful is this first experience of the rude disregard of her innocence and gentleness, which she will have to meet in her battle with life, to a young girl, reared from her infancy under the tenderest protection, and accustomed to look for all those little observances which women receive when connected with gentlemen! As the daughter of an officer, she had been used to meet with attention and respect from all with whom she had to do.

Now she stands in the crowded street alone, vainly endeavoring to engage the attention of the coachman, who has hundreds of packages to deliver, to obtain her goods, and carry away these poor, little, crying children, to their supper and their bed.

A drizzling rain was beginning to fall, and rendered her feelings still more discouraging and dismal, while her ~~head~~ and limbs, unaccustomed to and little formed to endure the fatigue of a day's journey such as this, in a close, small coach, with one and sometimes two children upon her lap, were aching intolerably.

At last, the coachman deigned to listen to the "young woman," as he styled her, and her boxes were thrown to her upon the pavement.

Old, old boxes they were, little formed to command respect. Few coachmen, porters, or hackney-coachman, in the world would think a person worth attention to whom such poverty-stricken property belonged.

And now she had to call a coach, but there was not one to be had.

At last, for a shilling, a person offered to get her one; and presently he returned with one of those horrible, dirty, disgusting old vehicles, which for so long disgraced the largest metropolis in the world.

A most heavy disgrace it is to this our England, that the comforts of mediocrity are so contemptuously disregarded; however, to own the truth, there is considerable improvement as regards our cabs, in cleanliness at least—thanks to the railroads.

The heavy vehicle came rumbling along, driven by an ill-looking man, in a dirty, ragged, whity-brown great coat, and drawn by two miserable skeletons of horses; the steps were broken, and the door dilapidated; the inside filthy in the extreme.

She turned almost sick at the idea of entering it: but the rain began to fall heavily, the children cried, Nurse scolded—she was glad to find shelter any where.

“Where to? and is that the luggage?” as it was hoisted up with a contemptuous sort of carelessness.

“To —— street, Westminster, not very far from Westminster Bridge;” and the miserable vehicle began to totter, and rattle slowly along.

The coachman took his way through various obscure streets, the abodes of misery and vice, sordid and negligent poverty, slovenliness, disorder, and dirt.

Was this London?

Was this where she was to abide? Was this the form that poverty assumed in London? Was this its aspect when excluded from the sweet communion with nature—that communion which almost atones for every privation?

“These dismal shades for that celestial light?”

She had a vivid imagination, a lively sense of the beautiful, something almost approaching to a passion for symmetry and order, and the most acute susceptibility to external impressions.

Discordant sounds, unpleasing sights, were to her a perfect martyrdom. The dark, dismal street, defiled, not washed, by the sloping rain; the dirty children running home with their rough tangled hair and degraded faces; the lines of ragged clothes hanging high

overhead in the air upon cords that crossed the streets; the rumbling of carts, filled with all sorts of unsightly cargoes; the cries and rude noises; the smell, the hubbub; and, above all, the dingy obscurity of smoky twilight which darkened every thing, combined to produce an impression the most deeply depressing, the most hopelessly discouraging, that she had ever in her life experienced. Much sorrow, much privation, much hardship even, she had known; but what was all she had ever known to this?

What were her former privations—privations, softened by the tenderness of those around her, and cheered by the sweet influences of home, compared to her feelings, thus tossed—poor, delicate vessel! upon the dark heaving surges of this vast ocean of human society?

She felt herself lost—an atom—less, a mere point, in this immensity of being; yet, alas, how painfully sensitive still! Even her faith, for the moment seemed to desert her. She felt as if lost, forgotten, amid the mass of being in its lowest state of degradation which surrounded her. She almost could have doubted of the all seeing providence of God, as the way wound through these endless, endless streets; these lines and lines of crowded human dwellings, all, as it were, forsaken of light, forgotten in their wretchedness and their misery. A dark cloud, like that confused and blackened cloud of smoke and fog—ah, how unlike the soft, gentle rain from heaven! seemed to rise between her and her Creator. Her last fortress was as if invaded—her last stay and support seemed about to give way.

She sat pale, terrified, bewildered; her head aching, her poor heart failing her, watching street after street, and her spirits sinking and sinking as they passed along.

Such is the effect which the exterior of these wretched portions of the great city is apt to produce upon the young, inexperienced heart—a despondency amounting to despair, a disgust and a distrust approaching almost to infidelity. But let not the soul bewilder itself with this mournful view of things; let not the imagination, disgusted with this painful exterior, believe that it altogether takes a just estimate of the reality.

Blessed be God, all is not dark in this distress; all is not mere suffering in these abodes of apparent misery. The human heart is still to be found there, and love and virtue enlighten many a miserable dwelling. Then there is some compensation in the free communion of thought, the interchanges of society, which subsist between man and man. Then there is habit—that custom of the sense which accommodates itself to so much.

Compensation! compensation! such is the constitution of humanity.

The Almighty provides compensations where absolute blessings are denied.

And people are often both better and happier than they appear.

Let us comfort ourselves with this in our hours of despondency; but let us not the less labor, and earnestly labor, to sweep this foul blot on our system away.

At last the time seems coming when a new dawn shall arise, and the "great light" shall penetrate to these long lost and degraded ones.

These narrow alleys, and these close, dark streets—these gloomy dens of wretchedness and vice, shall be purified. Railway courses, in vast channels, have done something in carrying light and air, which are the first necessary conditions of wholesome life, into these hidden corners. Streets are being leveled, nests of misery rooted out, and every new house, as it arises in the place of others thrown down, is evidently calculated for a happier and more orderly population than the preceding one. The filth, and the misery, and the pollution, and the abominations of darkness, become exposed to the eye of all, leading all to unite in the endeavor to clear it away.

It was some few years ago when Angela entered London, and things were still in this respect much as they had been for centuries.

And it happened that the hackney-coachman took her through some of the very worst parts of the town.

At last, however, they reached Westminster, and entered a large, wide, but very ugly street, near Tothill Fields; and after proceeding some little way, turned into one very much narrower, and very much more gloomy, composed of small, mean-looking houses, built of dark brick, with sash-windows, dirty, narrow, and low.

They stopped at a little, low grocer's shop, in ——— street.

* * * * *

"In this world ye shall have affliction; but be of good courage, I have overcome the world."

Those who have experienced that inner life of the soul, grounded not upon a religion of their own invention, wavering and vacillating with every turn of imagination and thought, but fed and nourished with that real, substantial, bread of life provided for His servants by the Great Master, will have often experienced the comfort which an

isolated text, suddenly borne in, as the apt expression is, upon the soul, produces.

As the coach stopped at this mean and dismal looking dwelling, these words rang in Angela's ears, as if an angel had uttered them; and she descended at the threshold of her new abode, already strengthened and comforted.

It was a small, dark, obscure shop, where the commoner articles of general consumption—such as tea, sugar, candles, starch, soap, and so forth, were sold.

The windows were so small, the ceiling of the room so low, the little apartment with its one dark, narrow counter, so confined, and the wares to be sold so unpleasing in their exterior, to say nothing of a strong smell of tallow, that it afforded a painful contrast to the dazzling stores and shops which adorn the other and more privileged quarters of the town. These districts, indeed, may be considered quite as towns apart, contrasting painfully with the other portions of our magnificent metropolis.

There was nobody in the shop when they arrived but one woman and a young and very slovenly looking shop-boy.

The woman was, of course, their future hostess.

Angela looked at her with anxiety.

She was a thin, spare, rather delicate-featured woman, of the middle size, erect and somewhat stiff in her carriage, though her face was pale and sickly, and her countenance anxious and unhappy; however, she looked gentle, and not at all alarming.

She came round the counter, kissed and embraced her cousin, the old Nurse, saluted Angela, called the children "little dears," and gave them, in short, so cordial a reception, that Angela felt already relieved; and it, in some degree, compensated for the feeling of oppression and disgust with which she looked round upon the dirty, narrow street, with its opposite houses almost excluding the light, and the confined and miserable aspect of the one she was to occupy.

Human kindness, like the divine mercy, can brighten the meanest dwelling.

Mrs. Levet, for that was the good woman's name, had a manner such as the upper servants in large and wealthy families acquire; at once civil and dignified, for they are habituated to command as well as to obey, and find exercise at once for the principles of reverence and authority.

Like many of her class, she had invested the savings of a servitude of between thirty and forty years in this little shop; and in this small dark house, like many of her class also (to the surprise of those

who contrast the luxury and indulgence of their former lives with the sordid privations of the present) she lived apparently contented, the contrast compensated in her eyes by the sweets of independence.

No doubt independence must be very sweet, and service, in general, very irksome, or we should not so constantly see this exchange so cheerfully, nay, so rejoicingly, made.

Whether, like most other servants who adopt this plan of life, she would, through her ignorance of business, sink all her little capital in unsuccessful traffic, leaving nothing for her old age but a return to service, or an asylum in some almshouse, remained to be proved.

The care-worn face would seem to imply that she was already entering that hopeless labyrinth called "getting into difficulties;" but it might be, that her troubles and exertions in the different nurseries she had superintended had traced these lines.

The children had fallen asleep in the coach, and had been lifted out only half awake. They turned their winking, drowsy eyes around, and wondered, poor little things, where they could be come to. They had very sublime ideas of a shop, and especially of a counter, as of some mysterious, privileged place, behind which they had never been allowed to penetrate.

The idea of going *behind* the counter had, therefore, something very exciting in it; and their surprise and astonishment kept them silently observing all that passed, as, taking them one in each hand, Nurse carrying in her arms the still sleeping baby, Mrs. Levet led the way along a very dark, narrow passage, and up the equally dark and narrow stairs, with which it was terminated, and by which they ascended to their future home.

The apartments consisted of three small rooms; a little sitting-room, which looked to the street, and two small bed-rooms behind. In one of these, Nurse prepared to establish herself with the two little boys; Angela and the little girl were to occupy the other.

The back of the house looked upon a small court, surrounded with houses, still more miserable than those in front. They looked very close and very dirty; one soot-dyed elm-tree grew in a corner spot: that and a little square of blue sky—not now blue, indeed, but of a melancholy ochery gray—was all that was left discernible of that nature which she had so passionately loved.

Her head was aching, and her heart was aching, poor thing; but she had fortitude, submission, and patience.

The furniture of the rooms they now entered was sordid and mean in the extreme. A small square of Scotch red and black

carpet in the middle of the sitting-room, and six small and two *arm*, not *easy*, chairs, a little card-table on rickety legs between the windows, and curtains of a sort of dark brown stuff.

The bed-rooms were, if possible, still more uncomfortable looking. The walls had been newly covered with a cheap green paper, it is true, and looked clean and almost bright; but then the paper, like other green papers of this cheap description, emitted a most sickly smell. The beds were hung with a checked woolen stuff; and there were in each room two rush-bottomed chairs, a small corner washing-stand, and an old mahogany chest, serving also for a table, which smelled villanously, as old furniture in London does.

Such was the lodging, with firing included, provided by fifty guineas a-year.

Angela could not look round without disgust, and dismay, and disappointment, but she strove to conceal every symptom of these feelings, and putting her two little charges upon one arm-chair, kissed them, and told them that they were very good little children, and that they should soon have tea and cake, if they would not cry and be naughty, and so on.

She felt more for the poor little wearied things than for herself, though happily, little beings of that age are almost insensible to the power of those outward circumstances which affect ourselves so much.

But while Angela was thus employing herself, endeavoring not only to appear, but to feel contented, Nurse gave full vent to her complaints.

While Mrs. Levet was in the room (for even Nurse had some feelings of propriety), she contented herself with walking about, the baby in her arms, sniffing the air with a look of magnificent contempt; but no sooner had Mrs. Levet disappeared, going down, good-naturedly, to hasten tea for the poor little children, than she burst out, and gave vent to her disappointment in no measured terms.

"A pretty dog-hole this, indeed, to bring us to! I never, in all my born days, was in such a place! And it stinks like poison—enough to poison you, every one of you, my darlings! Why, Miss Angela, what would the Captain say if he could look down and see to what a pass you've come at last? And my poor mistress! Little did she think, poor thing, when she went off like a lamb at that farmhouse—I thought *that* but a poor place, but it was a heaven upon earth to this—little did she think where her poor babies were to be harbored next! Why, my cousin Levet must be bewitched

to let us come to such a den! And who'd, indeed, have thought of cousin Levet, who was so well to do in the world, and used to have things so handsome about her, filling her rooms with such nasty pawnbroker's stuff as this! It's a perfect cheat and deception as ever I saw; and I'll tell her a piece of my mind about it when she comes up again, as sure as her name is Sarah."

Poor Angela! Nurse's temper made every thing so much worse. Her very affection for herself, and warm interest in the welfare of the children, was thus rendered a source of perpetual annoyance to this young creature, who seemed fated to have every description of evil, small as well as great, accumulated round her youthful head.

But youth is heroic and pious; and heroism and piety are like bright-armed angels, ready to guard and to defend.

It was become like a second nature with her, instead of looking for support in her difficulties or privations from Nurse, to find every thing aggravated by her ill-humor.

There are thousands and thousands of all classes, by the way, who, though possessed of kind hearts, and good, and generous, nay, benevolent dispositions, in the main, yet having never been taught from childhood the cardinal virtue of restraining and governing the tongue, make those who live with them endure an almost daily martyrdom from the indulgence of their testy humors.

Angela was terrified at the idea of a new scene of intestine war, equal in violence to those she had often witnessed with Mrs. Whitwell, and from which the smallness of her present abode would render it impossible to escape; besides, she had already seen what she thought expressed kindness of intention, nay, more, real sympathy, in the countenance of Mrs. Levet, and she dreaded the diminution of such amiable feelings in one upon whose good will so much of their happiness must depend.

"I beseech you, dear Nurse," laying her hand upon her arm, "do no such thing. It is not Mrs. Levet's fault if she is not rich enough to put better things into her rooms; and, besides, what *does* it signify?"

"I can't think what makes her so poor. Why, only look!" said Nurse, turning her disdainful eyes around; "did you ever see such a carpet, and such chairs, and such a nasty, rickety thing as this table?" spurning at it with her foot. "Why, Miss Angela, when I went to see her first, after she had left service, and just before she married Tom Levet, Mr. Darby's head groom as was, it was quite a little paradise of a place she lived in, for she'd the cottage at the lodge at Donnington. She'd a quantity of real good fur-

niture; and who'd have thought but she'd have put some of it in her first-floor lodging? And I must say it's the meanest trick that I ever knew, and quite unlike Sarah Levet that used to be. And as for not telling her of it, she and I have been sisters ever since we were born; and it would be strange, indeed, if I might not tell *her* how badly I'm thinking of her."

Very good, Nurse! do like hundreds of others, indulge those who have been as sisters to you ever since you were born with your rude, rough truths, as you call them, and spare strangers; it is the usual way.

"I dare say," said Angela, "if Mrs. Levet has more comfortable things, she will, if you will let me speak to her myself, allow us a few of them, and make this room look a little prettier and more comfortable. But pray, pray, dear Nurse, let us put it off till to-morrow, and think of nothing but getting the children's tea and to bed."

Nurse, as usual, paid not the slightest attention to this remonstrance; but upon Mrs. Levet appearing with the teaboard, began with,

"Well, eousin, I must congratulate you upon the appearance of the rooms. I think I never was lodged in such a palace before in my life—all silks and damasks to be sure! And what's a guinea a week for such grandeur? But I've a little bird asks me, what's become of all that good furniture you had at Donnington? I thought for sure we should find a *little* morsel of it here; but I suppose you have kept it all for your own rooms above?"

Mrs. Levet colored, and sighed, and only said,

"No, Anne; you may go up stairs, if you please, and look at my room."

Her answer, and something sorrowful in her look, mollified Nurse in some degree; but she went on:

"I should never have thought of recommending your lodgings to Miss Angela—to Captain Nevil's eldest daughter, cousin. if I'd thought what a nasty, mean sort of a place you kept in. Why, Sarah, I remember when you were at Donnington, living there in the lodge, and before you married Tom Levet, that there was nobody was handsomer off, and had better surroundings than yourself."

"Yes," said Mrs. Levet, "it was very different then, Anne, to be sure;" and she sighed again. Then turning to Angela she said, in a tone of deprecation, "I hope you will excuse my poverty, Miss; I did not mean to deceive you; I did not think about it as I ought to have done, perhaps: it's a poor place I own; but what can you get for a guinea a-week?"

"A guinea a-week!" cried Nurse; "why, I call it a fortune! And, besides, what's this horrid stink? I'm sure it'll poison the children. You in the nursery all your life, and think of putting such little ones where there's such a death-like smell! I do wonder at you, Sarah."

"I was unfortunate about the paper," said Mrs. Levet, again addressing Angela. "I chose it because I thought it looked light and gay, and countryfied; and it was not till it was up that I perceived the smell. The man tells me, that if I will keep the windows open it will soon go away. I could not think of papering the rooms all over again."

"Couldn't you?" said Nurse. "I think you might have told me so, then; for I couldn't think of sleeping in such a stink, nor letting baby do it either. So I'll put the bed upon the floor in this room for to-night, and to-morrow we'll see what's to be found in London."

"You must pay for a week," faltered Mrs. Levet, but so hesitatingly, that it seemed as if nothing but the direst necessity could compel her to make the demand.

A violent outburst from Nurse was the answer to this: while the poor little children sat together in their chair, their eyes staring and looking alternately at Nurse and Mrs. Levet, forgetting tea, fatigue, and every thing else.

Mrs. Levet took all this so patiently that Angela was prepossessed in her favor, and secretly resolved within herself, at all events, to remain for the present under her roof.

Nurse stopped at last for want of breath, and a sort of sulky peace was for the moment restored.

Then Mrs. Levet busied herself so kindly with the children, that Angela was more and more pleased with her. She felt that she had found a friend in her utmost need, and gratefully acknowledged and accepted her services and kindness.

"I am so fond of children, little darlings!" said Mrs. Levet, pressing Nurse to let her take and attend to the baby, who, scared and astonished, sat upon her lap, with its large blue eyes looking steadily at her, seeming to have forgotten that it was a baby's proper business to roar.

It was quite true the smell of the paper rendered it impossible to sleep with the windows shut, but the night was cold and wet, and the rain beat through them when open.

The next morning the little children were all ill,

It is really a terrible evil, the way in which cheap things, not only

as regards green papers, but matters of every description, are got up in this country; and the vast additions to the sin of dishonesty that are thus incurred.

This system of cheating the poor man, by selling him at an apparently low price that which is, in fact, very unfairly above its original cost and intrinsic value, is carried on in the most shameless manner, greatly to the injury of all concerned.

So long ago as the Spectator's time, we find remonstrances upon this subject, especially as respected the vending of unwholesome and vitiated food; and I fear that, in the inferior shops in London, the evil has not, to this day, diminished.

There was nothing to be done but to paper the rooms over again; which it was at last arranged should be effected at the joint cost of Angela and Mrs. Levet, without Nurse being consulted.

Mrs. Levet had given Angela to understand, without explaining herself further, that her own circumstances were in a very depressed state; and that the furniture she once possessed was not actually sold, but at the pawnbroker's, she had confessed in a hesitating voice; but she added that she trusted to receive some money soon from her husband, who was still living, and at present upon the Continent with a gentleman.

These things arranged, their boxes were unpacked, and a few little memorials of old times, which Angela had preserved, put in their places; their small library was disposed upon the pier-table; the little children's toys in one corner—her work-basket in another; a china cup, out of which her father used to breakfast, in the middle of the chimneypiece; two extremely small silver candlesticks belonging to Margaret at each end; and a pennyworth of gillyflowers in a glass upon the table. The bedrooms re-papered, the smell gone, the curtains down; a little fire in the tiny grate. Angela sat down to her needle, looked round, and began once more to enjoy the delicious repose of feeling herself at home.

She wanted rest. The last six weeks had been one continual hurry and worry; rest was in itself a great enjoyment.

Nurse, who had made it up with Mrs. Levet—for these passionate people are ready enough to make it up when nothing on earth has been done to offend them, and to forget, very generously and graciously, all the violent and ill-natured things themselves have said—Nurse was sitting down stairs with that good lady, enjoying what she called "a dish of chat;" the little ones were all fast asleep, and Angela watched them, the doors open, her spirits soothed by their quiet breathings, and, communing with her own thoughts, was still.

CHAPTER XX.

Let not romantic views your bosom sway,
Yield to your duties, and their call obey.

CRABBE.

THE time was come.

That difficult period in such a woman's life arrived, when she must seriously set about getting her living.

A few steps below her in position, and domestic service would have afforded a certain provision for herself at least; and the children must have been supported by the public. Had she been of those who are called "the poor," she would not have been half so poor.

For young women in her class, few ways of maintaining themselves exist; and of those the remuneration is, in most cases, wretchedly small. The market is overstocked with these willing and friendless laborers.

To apprentice themselves to the milliners and dress-makers, to give lessons, or establish themselves as governesses in families, or accept the part of *dame de compagnie*, which is indeed much the same thing, almost completes the catalogue of the facilities offered to them. The recompense of the mere labor of a woman's hands as a needle-woman, even in the most skillful way, is so small, that it need not be enumerated.

In Angela's case she had already learned, in conversation with Mrs. Levet, that it would, with her utmost exertions, fall far below what would be absolutely necessary for the support of herself and these callow birds who cried to her for food. To give lessons as daily governess, was what she would have greatly preferred to all other occupations; but here, again, the necessity of making a considerable sum yearly stood in her way. It would require a number of families to fill all the hours she would have to dispose of, and less would fall far short of her necessities.

There seemed no alternative but to endeavor to procure the place of governess in a school or private family; for which, indeed, she was eminently qualified by her various accomplishments, though her extreme youth, she feared, might prove an objection. She must then leave her humble home, and intrust her little loves to the care of Nurse and of Mrs. Levet. And, oh! how she blessed the placid

temper of the latter, which would afford a rest and shelter to the poor little orphans against the heat and impatience of the old servant. Yes, she must be contented to abandon her nest, sweet and good mother-bird, and fly far away to procure nourishment for them all.

Her resolution once taken, she resolved not to allow herself the procrastination of a day. Her little funds were rapidly diminishing, in spite of Nurse's sedulous economy. Scarcely enough would be left to carry on the war until a quarter's salary would become due, even were she to find a situation immediately.

That very night, therefore, when Nurse was gone to bed, she called Mrs. Levet softly up stairs; and while all slumbered around them—while the little noisy street was still, and door shutting after door in the court behind told of the return of the wearied mechanics, Angela and Mrs. Levet sat over the dying embers of her small fire, and Angela opened her mind to her new friend, and asked whether she could assist her.

"I have lived in several families, ma'am," said Mrs. Levet, "in my time; but it's a long time ago now, and many have, perhaps, forgotten me altogether; but I will go to Mrs. Usherwood's, where I once lived four years, and inquire if they want a governess, or know of any one that does. There is a lady," she said, "but she's not in town, I believe, and will not be till next spring, who would be the person to apply to, for she's very rich, and knows a many great families. And she's very kind, and the friendless are sure to find a friend in her; at least, so I've been told; but I never saw her but once, and don't know where to write to her: besides, I've no claims. But I will put on my bonnet and walk over to Mrs. Usherwood's the first thing in the morning. She lives in one of the new squares, quite at the west end of the town; and I heard yesterday she was in London, though she does not like that people should know it, at this unfashionable time of the year."

"Do you think she is likely to be in want of a governess herself?" asked Angela.

"Yes, ma'am, to be sure she is. She's always wanting something of that sort. And now I recollect, that happens to be the very business she's come up to town about, as the footman told me yesterday. She's a lady rather fond of changing her servants and governesses—that's rather an objection; but, my dear Miss, you must get into the first place you can, having so poor a recommendation as mine; and then, when once it's known you have been in a *good* family, people will be ready enough to take you: for every body wants a governess nowadays, I think."

They talked a little longer; and while Angela was expressing her thanks for Mrs. Levet's kindness, her hostess colored and said—"Pray don't thank me, Miss. I am very glad to be of any service. I have been longing to make you any amends in my power for your first disappointment about the lodgings; but indeed it was out of my power to do any thing more than I did. These rooms were very comfortably furnished when I first wrote to Anne about them—but, Miss Angela, you know nothing is one's own when one is married."

"I should think not," said Angela, in her innocence. "Who would wish to possess any thing separate from her husband?"

And her heart swelled as she thought of Carteret; and how with him there would have been but one heart, one thought, one purse, one every thing.

She sighed, but she rarely indulged herself in thoughts which only served to weaken her spirits and abate her resolution.

"Why, I don't exactly know that, Miss Angela. It must depend upon who that husband may be."

"People should be cautious in choosing their husbands," said Angela, with a slight smile.

"Ay! yes. That is very easy to say, Miss; but somehow people can't, and don't exactly *choose* their husbands. It comes upon them they don't know how. Little did I think when I left Mrs. Darby's family, as dear Miss Augusta was grown up, and went to live at the lodge, where I had my poultry and my little garden, and all so nice and comfortable—little did I think that Tom Levet would come round me as he did. I was a simpleton, to be sure; but then true love makes us so trusting."

A slight blush just passed over Angela's cheek.

"I never could believe that there was any thing but truth in his heart when he had such a persuading tongue; and such eyes, too!—There was more in his eyes than even in his persuading tongue, Miss. But, oh, Miss Nevil, 'Men were deceivers ever,' as the old verse says."

Angela did not in the least assent to this last sentiment. Like many another fond, confiding creature, she believed her lover was an exception to the rule.

"I don't think, Miss," continued Mrs. Levet, "that the law is quite just to poor women. Mr. Barr, the Attorney, laughs at me when I say this, and tells me, what has law to do with love matters? and if women will be so silly as to marry, they must take the consequences.—But I don't think it's quite so.—Love matters are great things to women, and the law should take care of those who

don't know how to take care of themselves; and it strikes me as hard, because a woman goes with a man to the altar, that all she's made, or shall make by her own pains and efforts, is to be his, whether he deserves it or not—to spend or to spare just as he sees best; and sometimes when the poor drudge comes home, maybe kill her in a drunken passion; drunken with perhaps the very money the poor thing has earned or saved, and no help for it, except to go before a magistrate and swear the peace against him. Swear the peace!—as if that ever brought peace to any house!”

“It seems hard, to be sure,” said Angela, unable, as it were, fully to realize the situation; “but women should look out well before they marry, you know.”

Yes, my dear, Mrs. Levet might have retorted, had she known Angela's story. And how carefully you looked ahead before you pledged your heart!

“They don't know what they are about,” persisted Mrs. Levet; “for me, I never thought of looking about me. Why should I distrust Tom? every body said Tom was the best fellow in the world; something younger than me, to be sure he was. But how he vowed and swore! and what ways he had! I thought he loved me better than all the world beside: but it was my money spoiled him.”

Angela made no answer. She did not take much interest in the love adventures of Tom Levet.

“And now,” said Mrs. Levet, at length reaching her conclusion, “this it is which has brought me to the state things are in now. When Tom was master of me and my money, he became quite a new creature—he left his place, for he was Mr. Darby's head groom; and to be sure, to do him justice, he was steady enough for a week or two at first: but since that, with my few hundred pounds that were left, he thought himself quite the gentleman, and took to the turf, thinking, as he said, that he should turn many a penny by his knowledge of horses, and be quite the great man all the time. But somehow he was not lucky; with all his faults, he was too open-hearted and off-hand, was Tom, among those blacklegs. So he soon lost the most part of my poor little stock. It is only those who have *made* the money, Miss Angela, who properly know how to value it: so when I saw the money was going so fast, I took courage, and, ‘Tom, my dear,’ says I, ‘we shall soon be in the poor-house if we go on in this manner;’ and with what little there was left, before it was all gone, I bought the good-will of this poor little shop here, hoping to turn a penny honestly, and furnished the little rooms above neatly enough. But nothing has gone well with me; for Tom, poor

fellow, after a hard run of ill-luck, took to drinking French brandy. He was so miserable in his mind, poor lad, how could I refuse him any thing? So one thing after another went to the pawnbroker's, till I *am* ashamed of the apartment you have taken, and none but my own cousin, or you, my dear, gentle young lady, would have put up with it."

"Where is your husband now?" asked Angela.

"Gone abroad, last August, with a gentleman who was in a very great haste, and in distress for a servant; and Tom being at hand, he got the place in a hurry. He just ran down to give me a kiss before he was off: and he never told me either where he was going, or what was the gentleman's name. So like Tom!" concluded Mrs. Levet with a tender smile.

The only thing that affected Angela's fate in this history of love-betrayed Mrs. Levet, was the mortification the matter of pawning the furniture had given her, and her desire to make up what she considered a wrong done to Angela in some other way. She therefore repeated her offers of service.

A little more conversation followed upon the subject of Mrs. Usherwood, and they separated with the agreement that Mrs. Levet should set out early the next morning, so as to reach Lowndes Square before Mrs. Usherwood had finished breakfast, and see what could be done.

And then Angela went to bed, and lay awake thinking of Carteret—of his tenderness, his goodness, his love, and his melancholy forebodings of evil. She had mourned him as dead; and yet there were moments when she could not resist a sort of hope that all had not ended between them, but that, sooner or later, she should meet with him again. These vague fancies would come at intervals, like sunbeams breaking from behind the clouds upon a dark and heavy day, telling of a region where there is light. And so to her, amid all the gloomy obscurity of the present, some faint evanescent promise of a better future, would at brief intervals seem to disclose itself—and there could be no happy future without Carteret.

This evening it had flashed across her mind, that the gentleman who had so suddenly gone abroad last August, and who had engaged the services of Thomas Levet, might by possibility be Carteret himself.

But she rejected this idea almost immediately.

Nothing could by possibility seem more irrational than to suppose that if he had been obliged to go abroad, however great the hurry,

he would not have found time to write a few lines to relieve her uneasiness, and account to her for his disappearance.

No—no ! it was impossible ; it was absurd, romantic, ridiculous !

Yet now and then this irrational sort of hope would recur, she knew not why ; till Tom Levet and Carteret became inseparably associated in her mind. She caught herself once or twice asking Mrs. Levet questions about her husband, and again and again inquiring into the particulars of his departure. But all she could learn was, that Tom, in his wild way, after an absence of a few days, had run into the shop one morning, thrown his arms round her neck, kissed her, and begged her to give him all the money in the till ; saying that she would be troubled with him no more yet a while, as he was going to sail with a young gentleman that evening. (*Young !* he was, then, a *young* gentleman !) That the gentleman had taken him into his service because he was in a prodigious hurry, and had no time to lose in looking out for another, and that he was quite satisfied with hearing that he had lived with Mr. Darby, and married his old nurse, “chucking me under the chin, and looking so handsome and so droll, Miss, as he said this ; and he ran out as fast as he ran in, carrying away every penny I had in the house.”

A young gentleman wanting a servant !

That could not be Mr. Carteret. He was too poor. Yet, perhaps, he was not actually so poor ; perhaps, like many other people, he thought and called himself poor, because there were so many richer than himself.

“And you can not recollect where Mr. Levet said he was going to ?”

“I think it was to an island called Sicily, Miss Nevil, if there is such a place ; but I was in such a flutter of spirits that I really seem to have forgotten almost every thing. It was just like a flash of lightning running into the house—there, and gone again, and leaving me all in a flutter behind him.”

“Perhaps your husband will write to you ?”

“I have little hope or expectation of that, Miss. He never wrote me but one letter in his life, and that was a love-letter when we were lovers, and he was forced to leave me to go with Mr. Darby to Newmarket. It was a very moving letter, and I have kept it by me ever since. I never got another, for Tom hates writing.”

“When do you think he will be back ?”

“Nay, how can I say, Miss Nevil ? Do I know how far it is to Sicily ? Some say it's off the coast of Cornwall ; some, that its half-way across the world.”

At last Angela was called upon to give her attention to other matters, but this little incident had done her good ; these hopes, unreasonable as they might appear, cheered her on—she allowed herself, now and then, to indulge the idea that, some way or other, she should hear of Carteret again. And renewed to fresh cheerfulness whenever the thought occurred, she turned with added resolution to the new life before her. Come when he would, he should find her well-doing

CHAPTER XXI.

Men

Their passions and their feelings ; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That mid the simpler forms of life,
Exist more simple in their elements.

MRS. LEVET, true to her promise, had gone to Lowndes Square the next morning, and had visited Mrs. Usherwood.

Angela was somewhat surprised to see the extremely neat and respectable appearance made by her landlady, as she just looked in upon her before she sallied forth.

Her dress was exceedingly handsome, and her good looks would have justified Tom Levet's preference, even though so many years younger than herself, and had not the *beaux yeux de sa cassette* been still more attractive than her own.

"I am going early, Miss Nevil, as I told you last night I would," she said, "for Mrs. Usherwood is a very active, stirring lady ; and when she is up in town for only a few days, she's out by eleven or twelve in the morning, and not in again till between five and six in the evening ; and while she's out, you know, she may hear of something that may suit her : so there's no time to be lost."

Angela was at this moment sitting at her breakfast-table, with her two little children, and Nurse was standing by.

"Well, upon my word, Cousin Levet," said Nurse, "you are come out this morning ! I am sure, to see you on common days, so unlike the smart, neat, handsomely dressed Sarah Gillow of old times, makes me sick ; for I can't abide a sloven, and never could ; and some way, Sarah, to speak the truth—as a friend, you know,

ought to do—you seem, since you married, to have become a most dreadful one.”

Mrs. Levet had carefully avoided confiding to Nurse the history of her love, and the source of her difficulties. The misdemeanors of her beloved Tom, she well knew, would only furnish fresh arms against herself, and enable Nurse to wound her in the most sensitive part; so she only said—

“Why, Anne, when one lives in a narrow street in London, in all the fog and smoke, it ain’t quite like living in a nice, clean, light, large house in the country, with a nursery as big as any drawing-room; and some way one loses the custom of being clean, seeing every body else so dirty. And besides, one can’t keep clean half an hour, let one do ever so; so what’s the use?”

“Can’t one?” said Nurse, casting a triumphant glance upon her own wholesome, stout, and respectable cotton gown, and her snow-white linen apron. “No, not if one must wear your flimsies and flamsies that won’t bear washing, with flowers in a dirty cap, as I sometimes see you wear, I’m sorry to say; but *that* gown is something like—it’s like old times, Sarah.”

Mrs. Levet sighed, and cast a look of intelligence at Angela, and then she said—

“It was my wedding-gown, Miss Nevil; and I’ve hoarded it ever since, and nothing shall ever make me part with it. And now, if you please, I think I had better be setting out, for fear Mrs. Usherwood should be gone out before I get to Lowndes Square.”

“What’s she a-going to Lowndes Square for, Miss Angela?” asked Nurse, with no great suavity of tone. “What is now in the wind, I wonder? I suppose I’m not to know. But I think you might as well take me into council as that poor blundering simpleton of a Mrs. Levet.”

“I thought you were of my councils already, dear Nurse,” said Angela, whose sweet temper was proof against the wearisome provocations of Nurse’s humors. “We had agreed, you know, that I must immediately do something to maintain us all, and I am going to endeavor to get the place of governess at this Mrs. Usherwood’s; for Mrs. Levet told me last night that she heard she was in want of one.”

“And my master’s daughter is really going out as a governess, after all!” said Nurse, lifting up her eyes. “My stars!”

“Why, Nurse, it has been the plan all along; you know we talked it over together, and agreed there was nothing else to be done.”

"Ay, talked it over!" responded Nurse; "but I never thought it would come *really* to the point. And now it is coming to the point, I can not bear the thoughts of it. Oh, it's a miserable thing to be a governess in some families! And there are affronts put upon them, poor things! that your father's daughter was never born to bear. I can't endure to think of it—that I can't."

Angela's own heart, now it really was come to the point, now she was really about to enter the abode of strangers, and, for the first time, assume a dependent situation, had its peculiar terrors and secret misgivings to contend with. As usual, she met with no support or consolation from Nurse, who, the more she felt for her, was the more out of humor.

But her patience with the tiresome old woman, her command of her own temper—still, warm, young, and headstrong—under these daily irritations, and the resolution with which she held down in her own heart, almost by main force, all the irresolutions, hesitations, fears, and misgivings which were tormenting her within, was really beautiful.

It arose from her ready and cheerful acquiescence in the part assigned her. She accepted all from the hand of God, and only strove to perform her task well.

And thus she might be seen, not only vanquishing the repugnance of her own feelings, but doing every thing in her power to bring Nurse to a more reasonable temper, and, above all, to smooth matters between her and Mrs. Levet, with whom the old woman seemed determined to quarrel, as being the means, by her good-natured exertions, of forwarding a plan she herself so much disliked, though she was quite incapable of suggesting any other.

They had the whole day to debate the matter, as it proved, for it was past seven o'clock before Mrs. Levet got back.

She came up stairs without waiting to put off her things, and, at Angela's invitation, sat down and related what had passed.

Luckily, Nurse was engaged with the children, so Mrs. Levet was allowed to proceed in her story without any provoking comments or interruptions.

"I hope I have got the place for you, Miss Nevil," she began by saying; "and it's lucky I was a little later than my time; for Mrs. Usherwood was gone out before I arrived at the door, and I had to wait till she came in, which she did not do till past six o'clock."

"She had not engaged any one while she was out, then?" said Angela.

"Oh no, Miss Nevil; and that was the best of it. She had been

disappointed of two or three she had been after, and it had vexed her a good deal, as I saw by her face—for no lady likes to have her situation refused—much less such a lady as Mrs. Usherwood, who was a great heiress herself, and whose husband is a member of parliament, and a very rich gentleman, too. So she seemed rather pleased to find somebody a-waiting for her, coming to ask for it, you see.”

“And will she engage me, do you think?”

“Yes, Miss Nevil, I think she will; for I told her you were very anxious to be engaged, and would do any thing in the world to give satisfaction; and that I believed you could teach a great many things, and were a very accomplished young lady. ‘And without fine notions, I hope,’ Mrs. Usherwood said. And I assured her you were as unused to fine notions as could be, and so good-natured and humble that any thing would content you; and then she said how she was very glad to hear it, for she hated fine ladies and fine notions in her house above all things.”

“She didn’t use to dislike to have us well-dressed in the nursery neither, I recollect,” added Mrs. Levet. “The two years I lived with her she used to insist upon my being very smart when I came down with Miss Baby into the drawing-room. I used to think that it was a danger of giving the maids a taste for fine clothes, which, poor things! they’re fond enough of by nature. I liked a neat print better than a silk or a white jaconet; but Mrs. Usherwood called it vulgar, and couldn’t abide it. I’m sure Miss Jemima, her maid, was dressed more like a maid of honor than any thing else, with her hair in long ringlets, and her necklace and rings. But I suppose Mrs. Usherwood has seen the mischief of this, and don’t like finery so well as she used to do. And so the upshot of this is, that she begged you’d come to her at half-past ten precisely to-morrow morning. And if you please, Miss Nevil, as you’re strange in London, I will be very glad to walk with you there, and introduce you myself to Mrs. Usherwood.”

Angela had a new and neat, though extremely plain and cheap, morning dress, so that she could listen without anxiety to the report of Mrs. Usherwood’s splendid maids. She thanked Mrs. Levet for her kindness, and asked how far it was to Lowndes Square.

“About a quarter of an hour’s walk; and, if we go a little round, through the pleasantest part of St. James’s Park. And,” added Mrs. Levet, “as you are so kind and fond of these little darlings, it will be very convenient to you to step down now and then, and have a look at them. And besides, Nurse can bring ’em into the Park

when you are walking with the young ladies; and so you can see them almost every day."

Little matters are great blessings to those but scantily provided with such articles; this idea quite put Angela in spirits.

She was the most simple, straightforward, unsophisticated young creature that ever existed. She could not in the least understand the degradation of earning her living by making her talents useful; so the anxious ruminations of a long and sleepless night were not embittered by false pride.

She lay awake, for she could not compose her excited thoughts to sleep, dwelling upon the recollections of that dear past of which she was about to take leave, and endeavoring to penetrate that new future which lay before her.

She was then, at last, actually about to do that upon which she had so often speculated as a remote possibility, but never had, in fact, quite realized until now. She was to go forth, alone and unprotected, to take her place in a family of perfect strangers, without a friend to advise or encourage her in this new scene.

She could not help feeling as if there were something very awful in it.

Her thoughts reverted—they would revert, in spite of all her efforts—to Carteret, and contrast the happy life of industrious art, yet with an independence however small, which she had hoped to share with him. The exquisite delights of that little home which she had pictured to herself, and which his presence was to bless, and the prospect now before her—when she was to leave all she loved, to sit down at another person's board, and enter, alone and unfriended, that world which had once smiled so fairly upon her.

But she interrupted the course of these thoughts.

"And am I doubting and repining?" thought she, "when I ought to be filled with gratitude for my deliverance, and the deliverance of these little ones, from beggary? when I have found a place, and so early, too, without the least connection, friendless as I am?"

Then that good heart of hers began to compose itself with reflections upon the serious nature of the duties she was about to undertake—upon her youth—upon the vast responsibility before her—and, while she made the sincerest resolutions to perform her new duties to the best of her honest ability, and uttered her humble prayers for help, her agitated nerves became composed, hope and a cheerful confidence in the future succeeded; and as she closed her

eyes, the picture of Carteret, returned and restored to her, floated like a vision before them.

She dressed herself with much care in the morning ; but all her care could not disguise the extreme economy, not to say parsimony, which had presided over her wardrobe.

Generously indifferent to things which merely related to herself—after indulging a little in dressing her infant charges more according to their former condition than the one they now occupied—she had spent scarcely any thing upon her own clothes. Her plain black stuff dress, her small black collar, her plain shawl, and black straw bonnet, were certainly not at all in harmony with what had once been Mrs. Usherwood's expectations upon the all-important subject of dress ; but, in spite of Mrs. Levet's description of this part of that lady's character, Angela felt no uneasiness about the matter, for, as she glanced at herself in her little glass before she set out, she could not deny that she looked very neat—how elegant, beautiful, and interesting, in the midst of her extreme simplicity of attire, she was not in the least aware.

Mrs. Levet, however, whose eye had been accustomed to elegance, and to detect what she called the real lady in any garb, looked at her *protégée* with much satisfaction, and declared her confident belief that Mrs. Usherwood would be quite delighted with her.

"I should think she would," said Nurse. "I don't know who your Mrs. Usher-Kusher may be, or come from—I never heard such a name in *my* days—she may be glad enough to get such a real gentlewoman as Miss Nevil to be her slave, be she who she may."

CHAPTER XXII.

O Fool ! to think God hates the worthy mind,
The lover and the love of human kind,
Where life is healthful and his conscience clear ;
Because he wants a thousand pounds a year !

LOWNDES SQUARE, as every body upon earth knows, is a square composed of very fine houses ; one of the finest of the squares, in the finest and most *comme il faut* part of this metropolis of ours. Regulated as, I suppose, all other metropolises are, and ever will be, upon the most whimsical rules of preference with respect to some

portions of the earth, in contrast to others—a preference which has planted the present great world in the midst of what was some ten years ago a marshy, unwholesome flat, but which is now a city of imperial palaces.

Palaces, where every thing is assembled that wealth and luxury, and our passion for the beautiful, and our uncontrolled love of display, and our dread of being behind our neighbors in these things, can combine to render life a scene of magnificence—whether of enjoyment or not, is as the case may prove to be.

Surely never, in the fabulous eastern cities of old, could there have been such an accumulation of boundless wealth in the hands of countless multitudes as in this vast beehive of ours. What lines and lines of streets!—what squares and crescents, filled with large, handsome houses!—what oceans of crimson curtains and flowered carpets!—what gilded mirrors and enamelled consoles!—what wealth scattered upon all sides! It is certainly a very wonderful thing.

And then, to think into what hands this abundance often falls, and how it is used and misused by the myriads who have thus started into wealth, as it were, by magic! The favorites of fortune and happy speculation, too often incapable of comprehending the duties, or appreciating the rich blessings of the situation into which they have been suddenly elevated.

Their wealth is too often a source of arrogance rather than of honest enjoyment, and used as an offensive weapon, to depress and mortify the less fortunate, rather than as the means of making themselves and others happy.

Some of these *nouveaux riches* are gentle and inoffensive, overloaded with finery, and living in a fatiguing sort of full-dress life all day. Others are insolent and overbearing; others, luxurious and self-indulgent; a few vicious; many, by their talents, intellect, and virtues, shining forth as stars in the firmament.

Angela and Mrs. Levet stopped at a very grand house in the center of the square, the property of Rupert Usherwood, Esq., M. P. for the city of * * *

Mrs. Levet knocked at the door.

The three or four tall footmen that usually presented themselves upon such occasions, and the magnificent butler, almost too terrible for ordinary mortals to address, did not present themselves; nobody appeared but a small and not very clean page in an undress, who, after surveying Angela from head to foot, asked her business, and then conducted her up stairs into a large back drawing-room, where Mrs. Usherwood was sitting at a table, with her writing-desk open

before her, and numerous letters and papers lying scattered in confusion around it.

“Miss Nevil and Mrs. Levet.”

“Oh, Levet! is it you?” cried the lady of the house, just glancing up from a letter which she was perusing. “Sit down—I’ll be with you in half a minute.”

While Mrs. Usherwood continued engaged with the letter which she held in her hand, Mrs. Levet had signed to Angela to sit down; she did so, and then had leisure to consider a scene to her inexperience perfectly new.

The room was large and lofty, as all such rooms now are, and terminated by a splendid window composed of immense panes of glass, which would have displayed to the utmost advantage the high bare walls of the houses behind, had they not been masked by an elegant conservatory, now, however, completely denuded of flowers; a few pots of withered mignonette, and half-a-dozen straggling, half-dead geraniums, being all that remained of the splendid display which, in the season, made a summer-palace of the place.

The walls of the room were gilt in panels, and covered with gilded ornaments and painted representations of flowers and figures in the old French taste, the principal medallions being occupied with choice water-color drawings by some of the first masters of the day; but the whole was covered, from the ceiling to the floor, with muslin, as was the ceiling itself; the frames of the immense mirrors which adorned the chimneypiece and the center of the opposite wall were likewise carefully wrapped in yellow gauze; the chairs were in their brown-holland coats; the carpet was rolled up on one side of the floor; and the tables were all packed up, except the one at which Mrs. Usherwood sat writing, with her feet upon a piece of green baize, which was spread just before her to serve for a carpet.

Mrs. Usherwood was a fine, handsome woman, of an unknown age—her large and more than well-developed figure, her strong, robust arm, and stout shoulders, testifying to a middle age considerably advanced; but her face was so rosy and blooming, and still so very handsome, that it gave the lie to this, and left it impossible to decide upon the fact. She had large, clear, gray eyes, that must once have been mischievously beautiful; her abundant dark hair was braided about her face, and a small *negligé* sort of cap at the back of her head. Her whole appearance bespoke almost jolly good health, while the most perfect confidence and self-complacency were depicted in every feature, as there she sat, one well-formed arm resting upon the table, reading and considering her letter.

Once or twice she lifted up her eyes, and cast them, in an absent, negligent sort of manner, upon the two silent figures which sat there awaiting her pleasure; then she resumed her reading, with a business-like air of attention. At last, after about a quarter of an hour had elapsed, she laid the paper down, and, turning round, presented her full, blooming, front face to Angela, who, half frightened and half amused, regarded this very pompous and rather terrible-looking lady with an air of as serious attention as she could command.

"This is the young lady, Levet, I suppose, that you spoke to me about yesterday? Now, Levet, I would have you, as a preliminary, at once to understand, that I am the very last person in the world to engage with any one without the very best and most unexceptionable recommendations; and I hope you have made this young lady well aware Your name, if you please?"

"Nevil—Angela Nevil."

"A very romantic, trashy, novel sort of name, I must say! Is it your real name, young woman, pray? It's no use attempting to impose fine outsides upon me. I dare say your real name is Jenny or Mary Bond, or something of that sort. But don't be hurt or frightened, my dear: I look upon these things as very innocent sort of little deceptions; for though, of course, I should choose to be acquainted with your real name myself, yet I don't know that I object altogether to the adoption of one—the name of Nevil, for instance—it sounds aristocratic; and I wish it to be universally known that I suffer none but perfect gentlewomen among my daughters: but as to the name of Angela, I positively"—with a little half-insolent, half-patronizing laugh—"must put my veto upon that!"

"It is, unfortunately, my real Christian name," said Angela, quietly and drily, "and I have no other. My father was Captain Nevil, of the 64th."

"Really!"—looking at Mrs. Levet. "Levet, you are a voucher for this young lady."

The color flew into Angela's face. She found it necessary to summon all the strength of mind she could muster, to repress her indignation and avoid any actual demonstration of it. She was silent till the victory over herself was gained, and then she spoke again:—

"If my own assurance is not sufficient, I have only one reference to give—Mrs. Whitwell, of the Great Ash Farm, near Stollingford. There—or stay," said she, recollecting herself, "Messrs. A. and B., my father's agents, would perhaps be better."

"I have the pleasure of a slight acquaintance with Mr. A.'s

family," said the stately lady: "that reference will be sufficient. There's no further uneasiness upon that head, my dear. Your father was Captain Nevil, of the 64th, you say? We will conclude it so, and proceed to further inquiries. Hem—have you ever been out before, pray? and what is your reason for coming out now?"

"She's a vast deal too handsome for me!" soliloquized Mrs. Usherwood within herself. "I think I never saw such a figure before; and her eyes are just what mine used to be at her age!"

"Eh!" eyeing her through her glass, "what does she say, Levet? She speaks so low. What were you saying, Miss Nevil? I ask you whether you were ever out before?"

"No, madam—this is the first time."

"Never out before!—this is a most serious objection. But perhaps you have been teacher in a school, or something of that sort? I beg your pardon—an officer's daughter, to be sure! But then many officers are so miserably poor. I am sure I often say to Mr. Usherwood, and wish he'd see and do something about it. Well, my dear, don't be downhearted. Never out before! Very well, that's settled."

And the lady turned round and made a note in her tablets.

"Pray may I ask what age you are?" again fixing her eyes upon her, and looking, as Angela thought, very formidable, and yet with something in her air and attitude so like a fine lady (as "Punch" might have represented her), she could hardly repress a smile.

"I am nineteen—I shall be twenty next May, madam."

"Nineteen! And I wonder what salary you may expect?"

"As much as you can possibly afford to give me, for I am very, very poor," said Angela.

"A very odd reason for expecting a high salary, I must say, my dear, because you will easily comprehend the *rationale* of the thing. When a lady with small independence or so, and accustomed to the higher circles and the elegancies of life, demands a high salary—and really some of the creatures are dreadfully unreasonable—we, we really," laughing affectedly, "are obliged, you know, to submit to it; though it never can never be looked upon as any thing but a specious imposition thus to tax the necessities of parents. But when a young lady confesses to being very young and very poor, we expect rather—Miss Nevil, pray excuse me—to make a bargain. Youth, you know, is a most serious objection—though one," with another slight laugh, "that will abate with time; but poverty, my dear, as it has usually interfered with the acquisition of the necessary accomplishments,

besides being in itself a sort of thing with which one does not like to have to do—why, Miss Nevil, to speak frankly and plainly, which is the best way between people of sense, I should hope to find you reasonable.”

“ You will be pleased, madam, to name the salary you are accustomed to give, I shall be able, I dare say, to conform to your wishes. I am quite ignorant at what rate my services should be estimated ; I want experience in such things.”

“ Why, let me see—I give my lady’s-maid thirty pounds a year ; but then she’s such a dear, clever creature—and my housekeeper, fifty. Suppose we were to split the difference, and put you between, which I really should not think of doing, only there is something in your appearance that pleases me. Suppose we say forty ?”

Angela started, and turned pale.

Forty !—for them all. It would not pay for the miserable roof that sheltered them.

And yet, should she refuse it, what must they do ?

“ I am sorry, madam,” she began, hesitating, but rising from her chair as she spoke ; “ but I am afraid that sum would not enable me to fulfill the objects which I proposed to myself in seeking a situation of this kind. I have two little brothers and a sister entirely dependent upon me for support.”

Mrs. Usherwood looked aghast, in her turn, at this intelligence ; but she recovered herself, and, looking steadily at Angela, said, in a tone of marked disapprobation—

“ It is extremely disagreeable to me to have any one in my household with encumbrances.” Then, after a little reflection, looking a good deal vexed and disconcerted, she went on—“ It’s very odd to me how a young woman, so *very* young as you are, should have been so foolish as to burden yourself in this troublesome manner. Surely there must be some uncle, or aunt, or cousin, or something, to take charge of the children ? You said your father, Captain Nevil, was dead. Is your mother dead, too ?”

“ Yes, madam ; she died a few days after I was born.”

“ I don’t understand you ; I thought you said ‘ brothers and sister.’ ”

“ My father married again, madam ; and my second mother is dead also.”

“ And left these children a burden upon you ! Now, really, my dear Miss Nevil, I am but a recent friend—but you must suffer me to tell you, that I never heard any thing in my life like that. A stepmother, too ! If they had been your own brothers and sister,

something might have been said for you—but a stepmother! it's really too bad. I must speak out—I never heard such a scandalous thing in my life! Depend upon it, my dear, you have been dreadfully imposed upon, and the best thing you can do is to get rid of these little creatures at once. Pluck up a proper spirit, and throw them back upon their relations, I advise you, and come to me; that will furnish an excellent excuse; for—I repeat it—I never heard of such a scandalous imposition upon a young creature in my life. This will, as I have said, be your excuse; nay, lay you under a necessity to shake the burden off: for, depend upon it, I never will take a governess with such an encumbrance into my family."

"Then, madam, there is nothing more to be said," was Angela's reply, rising again and courtesying, as if about to depart.

"Stay—stay, my dear; don't be in such a hurry;—pray, sit down again," said Mrs. Usherwood, who, though well inclined to drive a hard bargain, had not the slightest intention of letting Angela go. In the first place, she had been disappointed the day before by three governesses, to whom her situation had been offered, and who had declined it; and she felt piqued and impatient to fill the place immediately. Then the idea of having the daughter of a Captain Nevil of the 64th as her dependent, flattered her vanity very much; added to which she felt quite sure that she should manage to engage the services of one evidently so necessitous and so friendless at a very cheap rate; and though forty pounds would not be enough, there might be ways and means found of concluding a very advantageous bargain.

"Pray, sit down again, Miss Nevil. I am your real friend, I hope you believe. I only said what I did with the hope of serving you, and of persuading you to liberate yourself from a burden most ungenerously cast upon your youth and incaution by others, and of furnishing you with the best pretense for so doing."

"There are no others, madam," she replied, gravely; "these poor children have not, that I know of, a relation in the world to take charge of them but myself."

"Very shocking, indeed! Well, well"—with a condescending cordiality, and a half patronizing, half caressing manner, which was almost too intolerable to be borne—"if that's the case, and you come to me, we must see what can be done for them. There's Christ's Hospital and the Graycoat School, both of which Mr. Usherwood subscribes to; and though he's very chary of who he recommends, yet, in a case like this . . . As for your little sister . . . How old, pray, is *she*?"

"Six years old, madam."

"Why, we'll make a little governess of *her*, perhaps, some of these days. So you see, my love, as the old proverb says, 'you may go further and fare worse;' and you had better make up your mind to my forty pounds. I assure you, my dear, without flattery, I am so much pleased with your appearance—a certain gentility that there is about you—that I wouldn't scruple to exceed a little for your sake; but I assure you, with our large family, it is necessary to practice the strictest economy, and I make a point of conscience of denying myself in those acts of generosity which are the greatest of earthly indulgences to a good heart. But still, let me see," with a considering air,—“Levet, I think you spoke of Miss Nevil's accomplishments; only one instrument, I believe: but you said the piano-forte—didn't she? Miss Nevil, are you a proficient?”

"I scarcely can tell whether I am or not," said Angela; "I have heard so little music in my life."

"Would you indulge me with giving me a little specimen of your powers? The key of the instrument is on the front drawing-room chimneypiece, I believe, if you would have the goodness to fetch it. I fear the instrument is horridly out of tune."

So it was; but Angela had wit to discover what style of music was best likely to give satisfaction. She sat down—played off by memory a most dashing piece, and made a furious clatter.

She was rewarded for her exertions by a very gracious acknowledgment from the lady, who actually condescended to rise from her chair, and going up to Angela, and laying her hand upon her shoulder, to confess that she had quite a genius for music.

"That will do, thank you, Miss Nevil," said she, returning to her seat and sitting down again. She seemed to be calculating a little.

The present music-master who attended her younger children, cost her between fifty and eighty guineas a-year; she considered, that if she added twenty to Angela's salary, upon conditions of her own, she should do very well for herself, and secure the young lady's services; so, after a pause, she said:—

"I dare say you could teach music?"

"I suppose so," said Angela; "my mother had learned from the best professors in Italy, and she taught me."

"Your mother? you mean your stepmother, my dear, I suppose."

"Yes, madam."

"Well now, I expect my governess to be down in the schoolroom at half-past six every morning; there is nothing, in my opinion, like a

habit of early rising : but suppose we say six, that would give half-an-hour—an hour taken out of the time for luncheon in the middle of the day, and another half-hour between eight and nine at night ; two hours' music lesson divided among the six little girls would give three lessons a-week : if you choose to undertake that, I would offer twenty pounds more ; nearly one-third addition to your salary."

"It would not be enough, madam," said Angela, steadily.

"Then, in the name of goodness," cried Mrs. Usherwood impatiently, "do tell me what would be enough, and let me see what I can say to it!"

"I can not do with less than eighty," said Angela, conquering with very great effort those feelings of shyness and shame which torment delicate minds upon occasions of this sort. "I had hoped for an hundred, but I can not do with less than eighty ; we might as well perish at once as attempt it,"

"Well really, my dear," said Mrs. Usherwood, with another self-complacent little laugh, "you are as clever at making a bargain as any of your sisters of the ferule that ever I met with ! You rate your accomplishments a little too high, I am afraid. But I think Levet said—didn't you, Levet ? that Miss Nevil knew something of drawing. Have you brought any specimens of your performance in that way with you?"

"No, madam ; but I can draw in water colors a little."

"Well, a little may do for such young children—say twenty pounds more, and you teach drawing. And now I hope you will not impose further upon my facility, for I never felt myself in such a give-way humor as I am this morning."

Another fifty pounds saved upon the drawing-master !

Mrs. Usherwood was really, as she insinuated, so pleased with herself and her management as to be in high good humor. Angela really wondered at her own courage, but we know what a brave girl she was. A true, brave spirit she had, which insolence could not render humble, nor indulgence insolent. There was that in her which nothing but the sufferings and mortifications of others could bend down—she could defy her own.

"One thing more, madam, there is, which is an indispensable condition of my engaging in any situation : I must be allowed, while in town, to visit my little brothers and sisters at least once every week."

"My dear creature," said Mrs. Usherwood laughing, "do tell me, is this all, or how many more last words and last conditions are to be imposed before our treaty is signed and sealed?"

"I believe this is all."

"Well, well, I will make no opposition about this, then; but, bless me!" looking at her watch, "the carriage must have been waiting this hour. I can not give you one minute more: but Levet, you can walk up with Miss Nevil to-morrow. She can come and breakfast with me, and then we will arrange every thing, and I will explain to her my plans for the education of my children, and what I expect from their *institutrices*—for I do hate that vulgar word governess. 'My governess' here, 'My governess' there: so like an old-fashioned school-girl. Good morning, Miss Nevil; good morning, Levet. By the by, where are you living now?"

"In — street, Westminster."

"And where in the world is that? Never heard of such a place before!"

"It's at the back of the Abbey, madam."

"Ah, the Abbey! Noble piece of architecture, is it not, Miss Nevil! Quite a treat to see the towers against the sky in a moonlight night, as one comes up from the palace yard—I have quite a fanaticism for the sublime and the beautiful. Farewell, my dear—nine o'clock punctually, breakfast. I am the most punctual creature in the world. Farewell, *au revoir!*"

And, very well pleased with her morning's work, Mrs. Usherwood entered her carriage.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Pains, reading, study, are their just pretense.
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.

POPE.

"AND now, my dear Miss Nevil, to give you a slight idea of my views of life and education."

She sat, the picture of robust health, at the head of her well-furnished breakfast-table, eating of a game pie *aux truffes*—her portly frame erect and vigorous, her cheeks ruddy and blooming, her large gray eyes bright, clear, and hard as diamonds; and opposite to her sat the slender and beautiful young creature, healthy and vigorous too, but whose slight frame seemed ill calculated to endure heavy fatigue, and whose delicate cheek, upon which the lovely roses of

nineteen had already a little faded, and eyes anxious and sorrowful, ill suited to her years, told of one engaged too young in the troublesome strife for existence.

"Exertion," my dear Miss Nevil, "as some Grecian orator—I forget his name, but I dare say you know it; I learned it in Pinnock's 'Questions:' an excellent school-book by the by—doubtless you know it well. Where was I? Yes. 'What is the first thing for an orator?' was the question asked; he answered, 'Boldness:' the second? 'Boldness:' the third? 'Boldness;' and so on. I say, What is the first thing in an instructress? Exertion; the second? Exertion; the third? Exertion. I am never idle myself, and I allow no one to be idle about me. I detest idleness."

She stopped for want of breath, supported nature with a little more game pie and a cup of hot coffee, and then, after a pause, went on.

"I often regret the hours that were wasted in the course of my own education. Certainly governesses were very different things then to what they are now. I was allowed to run about and play with my brothers for hours and hours in the garden, while my progress in essentials was dreadfully neglected. No wonder that I can neither speak Italian nor German, or that my progress in music, in spite of Nature having gifted me with a wonderful ear, is so inconsiderable, that to play a waltz or a polka is the extent of my ability; but certainly, as I said, things are carried on in a very different manner now. I expect not one minute to be wasted; 'always be doing something,' is my maxim. And certainly my elder daughters have turned out most highly accomplished, and my younger ones seem following hard upon their steps. There is a great gap between the two families: my youngest elder is eighteen, just introduced; my eldest younger, as I call her, only thirteen. Now when they are once out, of course all this sort of thing is at an end; but, till they *are* out, and while in the governess's hands, I expect the most unremitting attention to business."

"I hope I shall be able to give you satisfaction, madam," said Angela. "I have not been accustomed to idleness myself, and I do not love it."

"That's just what I like. Love it! I can't endure it! And now, Miss Nevil, one other thing—I do hope you are always well."

"As much as I possibly can be," said Angela, smiling; "and, indeed, I scarcely ever know what it is not to be well."

"That's charming—for it's the very reason I have parted with, I might really say, scores of governesses. Some way, they were never

well—always some excuse or another; headaches—heartaches—over-fatigue—dyspepsia—exhaustion—I know not what. Now, it's a principle with me, Miss Nevil, never to listen to people being not well—there's no end of it. Because people are not so robust-looking as I am, they fancy they can not be half so strong—but that's all a mistake. I really am much more delicate than I look, but I never complain of my health; and, therefore, I think I may be excused for not allowing any one else in my house to do so. The children often look pale and peaking, they say, but I listen to no complaints; and their elder sisters are such fine, blooming girls, that I doubt not they will all grow up so too. My last governess but two conformed to my views, and was excessively strict with regard to her lessons; unluckily, she left me to be married—she was quite a treasure. As for the last poor thing, I did not keep her six months. She had not been with me three before her headaches, as she was always complaining, begun. Well, my dear Miss Nevil, you have two examples before you and I hope you will be pleased not to imitate the young lady with the headaches. Won't you take a little more toast?"

"No, thank you, madam, I have breakfasted," said Angela, who began to find her horror and dislike of Mrs. Usherwood increasing every moment to a very inconvenient degree; but she comforted herself with thinking that she should, probably, when once launched, see but very little of her; and she already began to feel an interest in these six little girls, whom she painted to herself looking very pale, spiritless, and overworked.

"With respect to the *plan* of study," continued Mrs. Usherwood, with an air of decision, "I have my own principles, also. I very much approve of the system of questions, as I before hinted. It is an immense saving of time using Pinnock's 'Questions'—or stay, somebody else—I forget who. Never mind. It's astonishing what a vast deal about dates, and names of people, and places, and things, children get in that way, without the great expense of time usually consumed by reading. This leaves hours and hours of the greatest value at liberty for the languages, music, dancing, drawing, &c. I think a great deal of the languages. I know many young ladies who can speak five and read seven; and it is the height of my ambition that my daughters should do the same. My elder girls speak French, Spanish, Italian, modern Greek, every thing, in short, except German, which we have been unfortunate in—but they are highly accomplished in every other respect. Of course I provide masters for all these things; and the children have a French *bonne*

—a Spanish little girl to play with them now and then—and an Italian and German master. So there is a vast deal to be done, you see, my dear Miss Nevil; and you will set a good example, I trust, of laboring from morning to night.”

Angela smothered a sigh.

So young as she was!—still almost as playful as a child herself—what a prospect lay before her!—unremitting toil! We know with what spirit, and almost with what pleasure, she had anticipated the idea of providing for her little brothers and sister by her own cheerful industry. But that was as an artist, independent of the whims and caprices of others, and devoted to an art she loved to idolatry. Now, what a life of slavery was presented to her!

Ah! little do those who have *not* their livings to get appreciate the hardships those undergo who have, or feel for the numbers of young creatures—delicate, sensitive, and refined as themselves—whom the ups and downs of this busy, speculating world of ours, consign to dependence and toil,

The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune—
The oppressors' wrong, the proud man's contumely—
And all the spurns that patient merit of
The unworthy takes.

It is a thing sorely to be lamented, in a period so peculiarly exposed to the chances and changes of fortune as that in which we live, that some greater variety of occupation is not open to young women—that there is nothing but the eternally repeated one of the domestic governess—and that the part of domestic governess is often rendered so laborious and irksome by the carelessness and want of feeling of the employer. But while I say this, I must and will say, whether I am misunderstood or not, that, in a very great many instances, governesses make their own difficulties by their fretful discontent at the necessary conditions of their position; and that a great many, by the artful use they make of the power they possess when thus introduced into the innermost recess of the domestic temple—miserable traitors to their sacred trust!—are the means of sowing division and jealousy, and of alienating the nearest and the dearest, in order to insure their own power and importance.

The hideous tragedy of Paris—the abominable story of Madame de Genlis's career—are, with milder features, but nevertheless, as far as our manners can bear, being at this very moment carried out in numbers and numbers of families.

If the mother be to be reminded—and she can not be too often or

too strenuously reminded of her duties to the governess—let the duties of the governess toward the wife and the mother be seriously and earnestly recalled to her recollection also; and let the world terrify, by its execrations, the domestic treason which has too often been the return for the kindest consideration and indulgence.

The very governess of whom Mrs. Usherwood boasted was an instance of this. Short-sighted, silly, and conceited, the mother was easily blinded; but mothers more tender and discerning have been also blinded, till they have discovered with horror what was going on, though not, perhaps, till too late.

This governess, anxious to make herself a party in the house by means of the young ladies themselves, for the father, too often the medium of these base treacheries, happened not to be assailable—had insensibly managed to detach them from their mother, and by the most unworthy means, center their affections upon herself. Mrs. Usherwood's character, so full of all kinds of faults, offered, it is true, but too favorable an opportunity for the indulgence of these evil designs; for her infirmities of temper, her vanity, her conceit, afforded a wide mark for the sly shafts of the governess's satire; while the indulgence in secret of their indolence and their idle love of gossiping, and worse, far worse, their precocious fondness for love-making and flirting, had, for the time, quite engrossed all the affections their hearts had to bestow.

Mademoiselle was all this time carrying on an underplot of her own, in the guise of friendship, with a man possessed of some money, whose wife was expected to die of a decline; but the poor woman's tantalizing tenacity of existence rendered this interesting correspondence quite a long romance. And into this romance these young girls were initiated, taking a very active interest in it, till the time arrived when they were turned out of the schoolroom into the great world to enact romances for themselves.

Fine dashing girls they proved, and as utterly devoid of truth, principle, modesty, or delicacy, as girls thus brought up, and endowed by nature with very good looks, very high spirits, and an almost total want of refined feelings, were likely to become.

Mademoiselle terminated her story, luckily for herself, just as they begin theirs, and was now in the enjoyment of a plentiful fortune, and reaped the reward of the many agreeable flatteries with which she had endeavored to compensate to the unfortunate husband the disagreeableness of having a sick, languishing wife, and for the many sad and tedious hours of suffering, unconsolated by kindness, which this defection had occasioned to the poor creature forgotten.

She rode in her own carriage, presided at the head of a plentiful table, and failed not to shuffle her husband's children by a former marriage as much out of the way as she could.

The world teems with examples of the apparently triumphant success of baseness and hardheartedness. The wise will be prepared at once to find such results.

"Honesty is the best policy." Yes, most true upon the long run—but it is often a very, very long run; and those who are not honest from higher motives, and can not in those motives reap their reward, will often find their patience expended before they come to the end of it.

But in the instance to which I again turn from my digression, there is quite another aspect of the governess life presented, and that the most interesting in the world. Here was a fine young creature, whose gentle nurture had fitted her for happier things, full of a generous bravery of spirit, devoted to the love of others, and emulous to perform her duty in every respect,—a girl endowed with all the ardor and energy of her early years, yet subdued by suffering, her temper softened and disciplined, and her whole character based upon deep religious principles.

Here was one pure-minded, high-hearted, and good; energetic, industrious, and accustomed to labor; and, in combination with all this, possessing those charms of accomplishment and manner which the leisure of a gentlewoman's life seems necessary to give.

Here was a treasure to any mother, indeed.

And yet, miserable and provoking fate! this jewel beyond price had fallen into the hands of a coarse, ignorant, conceited woman, who understood its value about as well as the cock that of the pearl. And because there was no other way open by which to provide bread for these children, was Angela obliged to accept thankfully the hard conditions offered to her.

The case, I fear, is but too common; but where is the remedy to be found? Except, indeed, in that slow but gradual improvement of all parties—that culture of the higher features of the moral being which the rapid rush into wealth and consequent power, now common among us, seems to render so indispensable?

A real lady! a real gentleman! as the vulgar say—and what a world of meaning do they attach to the phrase! Is that beautiful model in danger of being lost?

Perhaps more so than we are quite aware.

Mrs. Usherwood told Angela that, for various reasons which she

did not think it necessary to explain, the family were going to leave Brighton almost immediately, and would shortly arrive at Mr. Usherwood's villa near Roehampton, where they would reside for about six weeks, and then, before the winter set in, would adjourn to Lowndes Square.

It was not, therefore, necessary for Angela to join the party at Brighton, and thus the expense of the journey would be spared; but as soon as they arrived at Roehampton a carriage should be dispatched for her, and she should be introduced to and undertake her charge.

"And as for the children you spoke to me of; what have you done about them, after all?" she asked.

"I have made no alteration from my first plan for them; indeed, it was not in my power. There is an old and trusty servant of my father's in whose charge I shall leave them; but I hope, as we shall be only a short distance from town, that you will be so kind as to let me visit them when I can be spared?"

"It is a most tiresome circumstance, and I can not believe but that, if you had exerted yourself properly, something might have been done," said the lady, who was one of those who never can believe that every thing could not be arranged in this world as they would have it, if it were not people's own fault. "I really do wish, Miss Nevil, you would show a little more energy upon this matter; it really is so very disagreeable."

"I thought I had fully explained how vain it was to expect any thing should be done for those poor little things except through my own exertions; and that my determination was to starve with them rather than desert them."

And when she got home, a pretty thing it was to see Angela sitting upon Nurse's low chair, the baby on one arm, and the other pressed round the two little ones, whom she held at once in her embrace.

All Mrs. Usherwood's hard hearted representations served only to make these poor helpless beings dearer to her, and to bind more closely those ties which that provident lady was so anxious to sever.

"Dear Angy, so glad you're come back again. Don't go out so long; it's so nasty when you are away," murmured the little ones, kissing and fondling her.

"Well but, Tommy, see what a pretty horse and man I've bought for you; and it will run after you upon the floor, if you will pull this string. And look, Lucy, here's a doll for you; we must make its

clothes, and it shall dress and undress, and you will put it to bed of a night, and take great care of it. And then, dears, there's such a pretty park not far off, and you shall go and walk in it. Nurse will take you—won't you, Nurse?"

Nurse stood looking at the group in silence.

The old woman's best feelings were excited, and something very like a tear hung upon her scanty, gray eyelash.

"Ah, Miss Angela," at last she broke forth, "it's very pretty of you—it is, indeed! But, do what you will, the light in this house will be darkened altogether when you go out of it. I am sure I don't know what will become of these poor lambs when they have lost you. And to go to be a governess, too!" her old irritable and unreasonable feelings getting the better again. "You to go and take care of another person's children, and leave my poor master's babes to run wild, any how! For what *can* such a cross old woman as I am do in bringing 'em up properly, poor little ones? Bless 'em!"

"My darlings!" pressing them all three to her bosom, and kissing them.

"But then, Nurse, consider, there will be bread enough secured for them; and won't that be a good thing?"

"It will choke me, for one, I'm much afeard, when I think how it has been earned by master's daughter," persisted Nurse.

"Oh, Nurse, don't talk such nonsense!" rising from her chair, going up to the old woman, and patting her cheek kindly. "I am sure you ought all to find it as sweet to eat as I shall find it sweet to earn."

"Baby, pretty baby," kissing and caressing the smiling infant. "Baby, my own baby, won't be so particular as foolish old Nurse, will it?"

Thus she cheered her own spirits, and tried to cheer theirs. Away from horrid Mrs. Usherwood, she soon forgot her disagreeable anticipations, and thought only of her eighty pounds.

The value of this was to be increased by its affording her the power to economize a little in the rent of her lodgings.

An income secured, she could venture to engage them by the year, instead of by the week, which would save between fifteen and twenty pounds. That would leave something less than a guinea a-week to subsist them all; and for her own clothes and cases of emergency, there was the interest of her little property in the funds.

So she felt relieved and happy. She was sure she should now get on some way very well, and, with a cheerfulness to which she

had long been a stranger, she kept walking up and down the room, playing with and caressing the baby.

Pretty young mother-bird! I wish you could have seen her.

As she lifted up the child to catch the sunlights that were playing upon the wall, a ray gleamed upon the ring which was upon her finger. Her countenance suddenly fell, for she thought of Carteret.

A sadness—one of these sudden returns of the heart when the recollection of the departed unexpectedly recurs—came over her. She hastily gave the child to Nurse, and turned away to the window.

There she stood, her eyes fixed upon that ring, musing upon the events of that evening when he had placed it upon her finger, and upon his unaccountable disappearance.

I have told you that a strange and, as she called it to herself, most irrational idea, had lately possessed her, which had connected Carteret in her mind with the gentleman gone to the Continent who had taken Tom Levet into his service. It did not amount to hope or expectation, but it was suffered to excite a sort of undefinable interest upon the subject of Mr. Levet's adventures.

She was standing in this manner at the window, lost, as it would seem, in thought, when the door of the room was hastily opened, and Mrs. Levet, her face beaming with pleasure, entered, without even waiting to ask leave.

"Oh! I do beg your pardon, Miss Nevil; I ought to have knocked, I'm sure. I hope I'm not intruding. And how well you *are* looking!" cried Mrs. Levet, who was looking wonderfully well herself; ten years younger, and ten degrees handsomer than when they separated an hour before—so great are the effects of unexpected gladness. "But I made bold to come up, because you see, Miss Nevil, I've been very unjust to Tom. I said I was sure he'd never write to me, and here (would you believe it?) the dear fellow has sent me a letter this long!"

Angela shook off her abstraction in an instant, and, sympathizing in poor Mrs. Levet's happiness, she went up to her with a smile of pleasure and a look of interest, in which some little personal curiosity might have been detected.

"Indeed," she said, "Mrs. Levet, I am very glad he has written to you; it makes you so happy. I hope he's quite well."

"Oh, dear, Miss Nevil, he seems so well and so happy, poor fellow! and he writes so prettily about past times to me. Perhaps, ma'am, you'll excuse that there's rather more love in the letter than

may be quite agreeable to any one but me ; but it's very, very pretty of Tom, I must say."

There was a good deal of love in it, to be sure ; but it was simply and truthfully expressed, and seemed to flow warm from the heart of Mr. Tom, to which it did much credit. The writer entered into a detail of present circumstances, and enlarged much upon his good fortune in getting such an excellent master as he had lighted upon.

"Just," to use the words of the letter, "as I was about to be ruined, body and soul, by that detestable French brandy—poor wife ! when I think of the numbers and numbers of times I've come home, quarreling with every body, and you worst of all, as a brute beast, and what a sot I made of myself, and how the habit was a-growing and a-growing upon me, faster and faster, worser and worser, every day—I can't tell you how thankful I feel for the good luck that first throw me into Mr. ——"

"Oh, how intolerably provoking ! Just come here ; the great, clumsy, red seal has entirely obliterated the name !"

"What was the initial letter ?"

"A V ; I do believe it's a V."

"And then comes a U—I'm almost sure it's a U," said Mrs. Levett.

But Angela examined the letter with still closer attention, and she felt certain, but she said nothing about it, that, though it was impossible to decipher the initial letter, the next visible was no U, but an A."

"Such a nice, careless sort of a master he is in some things, and I've half my time to myself ; but a tight one as ever you saw in others," went on the letter : "and all the better that last for your poor scapegrace of a Tom—isn't it ? He told me from the first there was a doubt of my sobriety, so he gave me fair warning, if I once transgressed, we should part immediately, wherever we were. He said he didn't wish to be severe, but he never tolerated a drunkard—a fool who, for his own brutal gratification, would ruin his own health, and destroy all the comfort of others into the bargain. It was his principle he said ; and he's a very sensible and determined young gentleman as ever you came across when he chooses it ; and it's a word and a blow with him, when once he's made up his mind to it. . . . It's a fine place, this Palerino, for that's the name of the town we are living at, and many English there is in it ; and who should be here but Mr. and Mrs. Darby, and Miss Augusta, and the rest of 'em, as gay as any thing. But master don't go much into company ; he's fond of being solitary like, and wanders about taking

views of these bays and mountains, which, to be sure, are as beautiful as heaven itself. He's a very famous drawer, is my young master, as he calls it—painter, I say, for he uses all manner of colors, which he carries in a tin box about with him. I think master indeed must be in love, he's so fond of his own company, only he never writes or gets a letter; and he's not in love with any body here, I'll be sworn."

She turned hastily to look at the seal again—that most provoking seal! there were a few little tips of letters, that was all.

She returned the letter to Mrs. Levet; there was nothing to be made of it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Across a bare, wide common, I was toiling,
With anxious steps, that by the slippery ground
Were baffled.

WORDSWORTH.

THE villa of Rupert Usherwood, Esq., M. P., Director of this, and Governor of that; the man of much display and of much apparent wealth, but who, some said—but whether they said truly or not, nobody knew, for certainly as many said just the contrary—was but as many a fair, ripe walnut, which if cracked would be found to contain mere nothing: the villa of Rupert Usherwood, Esq., was situated upon the reverse of the Wimbledon Hills, surrounded with those magnificent shrubberies which are the glory of our English villas, and commanding a very fine view to the southward.

The house was in the Grecian style, which dated it as of about two generations old, that being about the date of that taste in architecture, which has now given way to the rage for the Elizabethan; which Elizabethan is, no doubt, admirably adapted to harmonize with the character of our climate, only it has one great defect—the smallness of the openings in its windows—against which a caveat ought to be entered, especially as regards poor-houses, hospitals, schools, or any of those buildings erected to contain accumulated numbers, attention to whose health ought surely to outweigh all considerations drawn from the sublime and beautiful.

Let private men, if they choose, smother their families in ill-ventilated houses in order to maintain the symmetry of external propor-

tions; let them confine the admission of the air to these narrow openings, and abandon the sash and still more desirable French window, because nobody can prevent them doing as seemeth them best: but let an abundant supply of fresh air be the first requisite in every plan for buildings intended for the accommodation of the multitude.

The large French windows at Mr. Usherwood's villa, opening wide and admitting the air abundantly, rendered his house so pleasant and healthy that you will not wonder at the bright eyes and rosy cheeks of the three elder young ladies, whose emancipation from the schoolroom enabled them to enjoy to the utmost extent that most delicious air of Wimbledon, not only as it breathed freshly into their own pleasant sitting-rooms, but on horseback, or in open carriages, all the day long.

They led the pleasantest life that it seems possible for giddy young people to dream of, surrounded by admirers, their tables covered with invitation-cards, their heads filled with dress, polkas, and flirtations, their hearts as empty as their minds—mere flutterers over the world's surface, and most exactly calculated for the element in which they existed.

Mademoiselle's negligence in the schoolroom had, at least, averted the evil effects upon health which might have arisen from the active mother's too perpetual demands upon time and strength. They had done very little, while Mrs. Usherwood believed they were employed from morning to night; and their acquirements were of the most superficial description: but their constitutions had profited, though their minds had suffered, and they now bloomed forth almost entirely uneducated, but very tall and handsome girls, and with spirits quite able to cope even with their domineering, determined mother.

Mrs. Usherwood, whose temper quite unfitted her for observing that happy medium which might have secured one advantage without sacrificing the other, having in some degree suspected this deficiency, had resolved to carry out her plans more effectually as regarded her younger children; and being at last, somewhat unfortunately, as it proved, absolved from the absorbing task of filling the nursery, she had more leisure to look to these things herself. Her younger girls had therefore been kept hard at work under a regular governess of the horse-mill order, who went grinding on, with undeviating regularity, in one routine of constant, unrelenting employment. The schoolroom had not French windows; its one window was a sash, but one of that tantalizing description which will open but a little way—(the elder young ladies, by the by, had taken possession of

their own old schoolroom to make themselves a morning-room)—of necessity it was close and ill-ventilated, consequently the little girls looked pale and sickly; they were besides fretful, cross, and very particularly conceited, for they really had been stuffed so full of acquirements, and had conceived such a very high opinion of themselves and their late *very* clever governess, that never was any thing so absurd.

The interregnum of the poor young lady whose health had failed under so short a trial, had made them still more conceited and unmanageable than ever. Accustomed under her feeble sway to settle their affairs and arrange their tasks a good deal as they pleased, and to look down with contempt upon one whose acquirements, in fact, did not in many respects, equal their own, they were but too well prepared to receive the new comer, whatsoever she might prove, in a manner which promised to afford her much difficulty and vexation.

Angela arrived at the back-door in a fly, with two very, very humble-looking little boxes as her sole luggage, and was ushered by the under-housemaid into the room appropriated to her. It was a little place at the very top of the house, with a southern sun beating full upon the very shallow roof, and without a fire-place of any description. The little window looked into the back-yard, and the noise of servants with their loud and vulgar laughs, and the coarse rough tones of voice which it pleases so many of them to adopt, when they think they are not overheard, might be distinguished from below.

The bed was small, and the furniture as shabby as possible; but Angela had not been used to luxury, and she cared little about it.

She hastily took off her bonnet and black shawl, arranged her hair and dress, and, looking exceedingly elegant and pretty, went down, escorted by the housemaid, to wait upon Mrs. Usherwood.

She found that lady in a splendid purple velvet pelisse and a most expensive bonnet, prepared to enter her carriage to make her usual morning round of visits; but when she saw Miss Nevil she stopped, turned back, and received her with a great deal of cordiality, proposing, as time pressed, to accompany her immediately to the school-room, and to introduce her to her future pupils.

The door of the melancholy looking apartment, of considerable size, but lighted only by the above-mentioned very inadequate window, opened.

There was a rush as of girls running to their places, where, before their desks, the whole six were safely established when their lady-mother entered the room.

"Girls, let me introduce you to Miss Nevil, your new governess," began their mamma; "and I hope you will be very industrious, and attentive to her instructions, and do credit to yourselves and to your papa and me."

"Selina!"

"This is the eldest of them, Miss Nevil."

As a tall, thin, long-necked, pale, very plain, but clever and intelligent-looking girl, with sharp eyes, high nose, thin lips, and scanty hair done up in the knot behind, which is the sign of approaching "coming out," came forward, and with a half-insolent, half-tittering expression upon her face, presented her hand.

Elizabeth, next summoned, looked, for her age, much shorter than her sister. She was very thick, clumsily built, and her countenance was stupid, animal, and ill-humored.

She gave her hand, stared into Angela's face, and returned to her chair.

"Theresa! why don't you come forward, Theresa?" said the mother, in a sharp, angry tone. "What are you doing there, keeping me waiting?"

The little girl thus addressed seemed to get down from her high, narrow-backed chair with some difficulty. She had a more interesting appearance than her sisters; for her face, though very sickly, and with the black eyes surrounded with that dark ring, a sign of ill health and suffering, was gentle, and rather pretty. But she looked dull, and, as her mother gave her rather a rough half shake, half push, as if to rouse her as she came slowly forward, held out her thin, hot hand, and, giving it to Angela, never looked up once, but returned to her chair.

"What's the matter with your sister to-day, Selina?" said the mother; "she's more stupid than ever, I think. What's the matter with you, Theresa? Can't you speak?"

"I've got such a bad headache," said Theresa.

"Oh, she's always a bad headache, I think," was Selina's remark, pertly; "particularly whenever she's got any thing to do."

Three little children, Clara, Julia, and Madeline, laughing and pushing each other about in a rude way, looking pale, too, but strong and robust, nevertheless, followed and shook hands in a very boisterous manner, romping and laughing.

"O you little mischiefs!" cried the mother. "Little darlings, they have such spirits! I don't know what you'll do with them, Miss Nevil: just like what I was at their age. O you little wretch! is this the way you shake hands with your new governess?" as one

of the children gave her a boisterous swing by the arm. "You sad tom-boy! Go, get away to your places again—do you hear me? and be very good, and mind all that Miss Nevil says, you little rude pets! or she will have a rod in pickle for you. Won't you, Miss Nevil? Good morning." And the lady-mother swept out of the room.

The instant she was gone, the little girls lifted up their heads as by one accord, stared hard at Angela, then at one another; and all, with the exception of Theresa, who sat leaning with her head upon her hand, burst into rude, tittering laughter.

Angela was so perfectly new to her situation, that the rudeness of these children disconcerted her for a moment; but she soon rallied her spirits, and looking round at them steadily, as she stood there before them, she said—

"Well, young ladies," directing her look more particularly to the elder ones, "I am sorry to begin our acquaintance by discovering that you have not good breeding enough to know how to practice common civility to a stranger. I have been accustomed to good manners at the place where I came from, and I shall expect them to be practiced here. Miss Selina, you will be pleased not to keep making signs to your sister. Don't you know that it is very rude? Little girls, be quiet, and keep your places, when I bid you. Theresa, my dear, does your head ache so very much?"

"Oh, it does ache so!" and the tears swelled to the poor girl's eyes. "It aches so, I do not know what to do with myself; and nobody will believe it."

"It's not likely they should, Miss Nevil," put in Selina, addressing her governess with an air of assurance; "for they never come on but at lesson times. She can be always well enough when she's out in the open air. I believe she'd play in the garden, and be among the flowers, all the day long, if mamma would let her: but, luckily, mamma is up to it all."

"Would you like to go out now, my dear?" said Angela. "It is just one o'clock; I should think your lessons must be over for the present. Are you allowed to go out alone into the shrubberies, or have you a maid to go out with you?"

"Alone!" cried Selina, "as if No, Miss Nevil, mamma never allows us to be one moment alone; it's quite her rule."

"Then who goes out with you?"

"Our governess, to be sure! Who else should, do you think?" with a rude laugh.

"Speak without laughing, when there is nothing to laugh at, if

you please," said Angela, authoritatively. "And now tell me when you dine, and what has been the usual routine of your day," sitting down, and taking up pen and paper.

"That's my pen and my paper!" said Elizabeth, angrily. "Why can't you use Selina's? Every body takes my things."

Angela restored the pen and paper, with a look of contempt, and said—

"I am very sorry to see you so captious about such a trifle. Who will give me a piece of paper, till I have opened my own writing-desk?"

Theresa opened her little desk hastily, took out a quire of her best-loved note-paper with pink edges, and with a new pen, and presented them in silence.

"Thank you, my dear," said Angela, kindly.

"That's always the way she does," muttered Elizabeth; "always setting herself up for the best!"

"What is that you are saying, Elizabeth? If you wish to equal her, imitate her."

"Imitate Theresa!" said Selina, with a toss of her head; "well, that's too good!"

"The order of the day," said Angela, "if you please. When I have seen how your time has been arranged, I then can make what alterations in the plan I think proper."

"Oh, I don't think you will be allowed to make any alterations at all," put in Selina. "Mamma arranged all this with Miss Carter long ago; and she was so excessively clever, and we got on so amazingly with her, that every body was surprised at us."

"Half-past six, enter school, read a chapter in the Bible, and prayers; class of German verbs; breakfast at eight. German exercises, Italian exercises, Spanish exercises, modern Greek exercises, Latin Grammar, and Greek St. John, according to the Hamiltonian method; Pinnock's Questions, and an exercise in Pestalozzi's Mother's Book for the little ones, till one. Gymnastics; dinner at two, and walk till three. Repetitions of poetry, grammar, questions in geology, history, astronomy, chemistry, botany. Eight o'clock, younger girls to bed; elder girls and governess down to tea, in the drawing-room. Half-past eight, retire; nine, governess retires."

This is the catalogue of employments which Selina, with considerable triumph in her manner, ran through, as desired.

When she had done, she looked up at her new governess with a look of considerable exultation, as much as to say—

"There—what do you think of that?" and kept eyeing her in a manner half curious, half insolent.

"You ought to be amazingly clever young ladies, indeed," said Angela, quietly; "but I want very much to know—when is the time for play?"

"Play!" cried Selina, who seemed to take upon herself to be the spokeswoman for the party; "as if we had any time for play! The little ones, to be sure, play a little: I forgot to say, they go out in the garden with nurse half an hour before we have done."

"And they seem able to play in the schoolroom, besides," said Angela, smiling at them good-humoredly; for she could not help being amused with their exuberant spirits, which were now being expended in all sorts of ridiculous monkey tricks, as they sat there with nothing to do. "But, little girls, mind me!"

They answered like clock-work to the word of command, and sat straight as arrows, but inclined to pout at being called "little girls," and told to "mind" in this decided manner.

"The schoolroom is not the place to play in. When you have done your lessons, you shall go and play somewhere else, and laugh, and make as much noise as you please. And now," looking at Theresa, "as it is the first day, let us all go out walking together, that we may get better acquainted; and you shall show me the flower-garden and shrubberies."

This was too agreeable a proposal not to be cheerfully acceded to.

The little girls went up to put on their things, and soon returned, buried in immense bonnets, calculated to exclude every ray of the sun, and to which were appended capacious brown-holland tippets; then Angela, taking Theresa by the hand, they all went down the back-stairs, and through a small door out of the back-hall into the pleasure-grounds.

The day was bright and cheering—a fine calm day, at the very latter end of October; they walked through the fine shrubberies, by the pools of water dark and clear as in a picture of Ruysdael's; the pendant willows hanging over them, and beautifully garlanding their sides. They visited the flower-garden, laid out upon a lawn surrounded by a shrubbery of rare trees—the rarest and most expensive trees; to say nothing of rhododendrons six feet high; tree-roses of every possible variety; in short, beautiful shrubs of every description, which you must fancy for yourselves, for I am not botanist enough to enumerate them.

Briefly, no expense, it was evident, had been spared in any way; indeed, this flower-garden was the admiration of every body; and it

was pronounced quite wonderful that, with her sixteen children, and performing the duties of wife and mother in so exemplary a manner, as was known to be the case, Mrs. Usherwood should find leisure to attend to her garden, and exhibit so much taste in the disposition of her walks and parterres: for she took all the credit of it to herself. It only happened that she had a very clever and very expensive gardener to arrange these things for her, which he did at twice or thrice the necessary cost, and robbing her of most of her best flowers besides.

The fact was, in her vain endeavor to do every thing, she effected nothing, and, through her idle ambition to outshine the rest of the world in every way, was disliked by every body about her, and always out at elbows.

She endeavored to make up for the unnecessary expenses of one department by the meanest saving in others, and to reconcile economy and waste, profusion and order, discipline and neglect. Her life was thus one vast miscalculation, injurious to every single being dependent upon her.

She was not a bad-hearted woman in the main, perhaps. She was better, after all, than her daughters, who, reared according to the newest improved fashion of those days, were perfectly odious.

At eight o'clock the schoolroom door was opened by a footman, with—

"Mrs. Usherwood's compliments, and requests the company of Miss Nevil, with the young ladies, in the drawing-room."

It was what the girls called "a company day." So, in expectation of the summons, they had been dressed in clean muslin frocks, with abundance of pink ribbon run into the hems, laced across the bosoms, and bowed about the sleeves; and their anxiety about how they should look, and their goings and comings to the glass, and their ill-humor with their maids, was quite a miniature imitation of their elder sisters' behavior, and would have been very ridiculous, if it had not been very disagreeable.

"As for Theresa, she's not to go down to tea," Selina had said.

"And why not, pray?"

"Oh, Miss Carter never let her go down when she'd got a headache. She said it was the only way to cure her of such a bad habit."

"Does your head ache now, Theresa?"

"No, not at all."

"Would you like to go down?"

"Yes, very much indeed."

"Make yourself ready, then."

"No, but I'm sure she mustn't go down," said Selina, with an anxious look. "I'm sure she ought not to go down: Miss Carter used to say, she'd never cure herself of her headaches if she wasn't mortified for them. She'd always be thinking herself ill. Now didn't she, Elizabeth?"

"Yes, to be sure," said Elizabeth, "she was always angry when Theresa said she'd a headache; but I think she was very unjust."

"Well but, Miss Nevil," persisted Selina, "I'm sure you ought not to let her go down."

"Will your mamma be displeased, when she hears you have had a headache, if I let you go down?"

"Mamma never takes any notice about it," said the little girl.

"What does that signify?" said Selina. "I'm sure Miss Carter wouldn't have let her go."

"Well," said Angela, "I have seen a good many things that have surprised me to-day, Selina; but the most astonishing of all you have kept for the last. If I had not seen it myself, nothing could have persuaded me that any one could be so anxious to deny their sister a pleasure; and merely, as it seems to me, for the pleasure of denying it. Did you ever, now, in the whole of your life—old as you are, and clever as you, perhaps, are—ask yourself why you were endeavoring to prevent your sister's enjoyment?"

Selina looked surprised, and colored.

"I don't know what you mean," she said, sulkily.

"No, I do not suppose that you do: you seem to me entirely unaccustomed to take account of your own heart. But we will say no more about this just now; we shall know each other better presently, I hope. Theresa, put on your evening frock."

Poor Theresa obeyed with a glance of delight at Miss Nevil, and of triumph at Selina, who answered her by a frown.

Angela stood by, marking all these different expressions of temper and character with an observing eye. Her spirits rose to the task before her. All girls at her age take a certain pleasure in the contest with, and the subjugation of, injustice and wrong. They have more spirit and less indulgence than the more experienced; and rush into the strife with a heedless bravery, which often exposes them to difficulty.

In the case before us, Angela perhaps too early and too openly expressed her disapprobation, and set herself in opposition to the faults of those committed to her care; and yet, I know not how, there is something noble in this high, unbroken spirit—this defiance

of difficulty in the brave-minded girl, that is true. One can not help delighting in the exuberance of that energy which time will inevitably subdue ; and in the clear, unmodified sense of what is right and wrong, which a wider experience of human nature will soften down to a greater indulgence.

Selina did not quite hate her new governess for the home truths she uttered. In justice to this disagreeable, but not altogether ill-conditioned girl, so much must be confessed. The truth was, Angela looked so clever, had something about her, after all, so charming, that she already had captivated Selina's fancy, to a certain degree. As for Theresa, treated kindly for almost the first time in her life, her heart began to be already filling with a warm affection.

She had never loved any one before but the wet-nurse who reared her, and who had continued in the nursery as one of the under-nursemaids for a year or two afterward ; defending the poor sickly child, with all her might and power, in the many fights and struggles of that stormy place. The little delicate and fretful child had, indeed, a poor chance, and was sure, in every contention, to get the worst of it. A battle with head-nurse in her behalf had occasioned the dismissal of poor Jenny Sparks ; and after her departure, which the poor child felt with an anguish of desolation not to be described, she moped about, silent, sulky, disregarded—in that sort of torpid, half-dreaming existence of misery, which those who have spent this portion of life as sickly children too often unheeded do, have described to me.

The door opened and displayed an immense drawing-room, blazing with the light of multitudes of wax candles, and resounding with the not very subdued tones, which proceeded from a large party of gentlemen and ladies, talking away as fast as possible.

The *coup d'œil* was magnificent. Gilded cornices ; walls wreathed with many-colored flowers ; brocatelle curtains of purple and gold ; a carpet of crimson and gold color ; tables with tablecloths of velvet, and fringed with gold ; sofas, settees, causeuses, fauteuils, cabriole chairs framed in white and gold, chiffoniers, mirrors, girandoles, and screens resplendent with gold—gold here, gold there, gold every where. Moreover, there were marble busts, enamelled snuff-boxes, Japan cabinets, Dresden china, Bohemian glass, flowers, pictures, and lap-dogs.

The list looks something like an upholsterer's catalogue, and some ill-natured people would say the room looked rather like an upholsterer's shop ; but you must scatter all these objects about in the

most approved taste, and mingle with the gold here, gold there, gold every where, abundance of showy colors, abundance of splendid mirrors, abundance of light, and abundance of flowers (for so it was that Mrs. Usherwood liked to have things), and you will own it looked brilliant and not so bad, after all. And thus it was also that the tall, broad-chested, well-shaped, handsome-faced, rather pompous gentleman, with his still brown hair carefully brushed up so as to conceal a commencing baldness, liked to have things too.

And so did those three tall dashing girls, who, something in imitation of the three Graces in a group of Sèvres china, stood together, leaning against the side of the bay-window, laughing and flirting to extremity with a circle of gentleman standing before them. Every body was talking, and seemed enjoying themselves. Angela, holding Theresa by the hand, and preceded by the two others, glided in.

Nobody took the slightest notice of her, which made her feel rather awkward and uncomfortable; Selina and Elizabeth made their way immediately into the midst of the circle, with the most perfect *sang froid* and assurance; and she was left behind, standing alone with Theresa.

She, however, advanced a little, and taking a chair, sat down as near the mistress of the house as she possibly could, she being the only person present to whom she had ever addressed a syllable, and strove to overcome the very disagreeable and oppressive feeling of shyness which was creeping over her.

Mrs. Usherwood, splendidly arrayed in a crimson velvet dress, with a profusion of rich lace, a good many diamonds, and with a turban of crimson cashmere and gold upon her head, looked almost overwhelmingly handsome and important.

She, however, turned and condescended to acknowledge Angela by a little nod of the head, and then appearing to conclude, as a matter of course, that she would sit down a little apart from the rest, performing the part of a perfect cipher, and neither speak nor expect to be spoken to, resumed the conversation she was engaged in. It is very easy to treat these little mortifications, to which young women in obscure situations are thus exposed in society, as mere trifles unworthy their regard; but I know few more depressing sensations than that of thus feeling alone amid busy and animated crowds—than this learning how inferior to, and in fact how perfectly valueless in the eyes of any one present, such a person is. I believe these feelings are what governesses, poor things! often suffer from very much; more than is reasonable perhaps, but not more than is natural.

The little timid girl who still held Angela's hand, and seemed to crouch up to her for protection, certainly bestowed as much comfort as she received upon this occasion.

"I have at least a companion in my misery," thought she to herself; and then her natural spirits, which had been damped at first, began to rise. She laughed within herself at her own susceptibility, and took refuge, like the merry cobbler, in the reflection, that if all these fine people cared not for her, neither did she care for them: so she was soon able to amuse herself with looking about her.

The three girls, standing leaning against the pilasters of the bay-window, attracted her attention immediately, and she asked Theresa, in a low voice, who they were.

"That's sisters," was the answer.

There was such a crowd of gentleman assembled at this place, that several of those who sat at the other end of the room were completely hidden behind them. The little girl pointed out her papa, and some others of the company; however, at last there was a little stir in the crowd assembled round the Miss Usherwoods. A young—a very young man, an officer in some showy regiment, appeared half to prostrate himself before Miss Matilda, the youngest of the three; and after much delay, and a great deal of affectation, she suffered herself to be led to the piano-forte, the crowd following:

"Oh!" exclaimed the little girl, in a glad whisper, as this movement displayed those sitting behind, "look, Miss Nevil, if there isn't Miss Grant!"

A very dark-eyed and dark-complexioned lady, with coal-black hair braided simply round her face, was sitting there; she was dressed richly, but with extreme simplicity, in a black brocaded silk, with a fall of fine guipure, and the black velvet round her neck fastened with a small rose of a few fine diamonds; one or two hair bracelets, and one of black velvet upon each arm, completed her costume.

A figure erect without stiffness—an outline simple without severity—a dignity without affectation—an air of serenity and vigor combined—such was her appearance: her features were plain, rather rudely than coarsely cut—a thick mouth—a thick nose—Why do I enter into such details? But over the whole countenance was disposed an expression of intelligence and benevolence at once; and when she spoke, such a delightful sweetness was visible round her mouth, that it was impossible to conceive an appearance at once more attractive or more striking.

Such was Joan Grant, now forty years of age.

She sat by an old lady excessively overdressed and covered with jewels, though her head was shaking with palsy, and her face furrowed over with wrinkles.

"That's Miss Grant—Aunt Joan—as we sometimes call her in fun," said little Theresa. "She's an old maid, Selina says; but she's so good-natured, you can't think."

The singing had by this time begun; Miss Matilda-warbled like any nightingale. Miss Grant, as Angela observed, seemed to listen with attention for a short time; then, as if the music did not please her, she turned her head away, and began to turn over some drawings which lay upon the table beside her.

When the strain had ceased, she lifted up her head again, saw the little Theresa, and made a sign to her to come across the room. The little girl, evidently delighted, let Angela's hand drop and sprang forward directly.

"O little miss! where are you going to in such a hurry?" said her father, stopping her.

"To Miss Grant—to Aunt Joan: she nodded to me to come."

"So so," said the papa; "are you a favorite of Miss Grant's, then?"

He took his little girl by the hand, and walking up to where Joan sat, said:

"I am sure Miss Grant is extremely kind to notice my poor shabby little girl, but here she is at your service. Have you heard Matilda sing before?" he went on: "rather a fine voice, is it not? I have heard a very good judge say it has power sufficient to fill the San Carlos at Naples, which I believe is reckoned the largest *salle de théâtre* in Europe."

"Very possibly—it is a powerful voice. My dear little Theresa, I am very glad to see you in the drawing-room to-night: you very seldom come down, I think."

"I've always a headache," said the little girl, pressing up to her and speaking in a confidential little whisper. "But look there, we've got a new governess, and she seems very good-natured indeed, she let me come."

The dark eyes were turned upon Angela.

"Can that young lady be your governess, my dear?"

"Yes, to be sure she is; and I like her very much indeed; she's so good-natured. But Selina and Elizabeth say they can not bear her, for she's so *very* poor."

"She seems an extremely nice young lady. I hope you will all

be good, and mind her as much as you can, for she looks very young and delicate ; and it's harder, my love, to have to teach lessons than to learn them : which all children should recollect, my little Theresa."

Theresa felt as if this were a fact she could *not* admit.

There was at this moment a little additional noise and stir at the piano-forte, and—

"No, I protest I won't! how can you plague me so? I won't play the accompaniment, I say; it's too hard. Lucy, will you play it for me?"

"Not I," said Lucy, who had just sat down to a game of *écarté* with Colonel Prendergrass; "you ought to learn to play your own accompaniments."

"But this is such a beautiful song," persisted the young lieutenant—the one who had made the mock prostration to induce Miss Matilda to sing; "and I am so passionately fond of it. And," smiling in a most insinuating way, "I am sure you could play the accompaniment if you would only *try*! Besides, there's your elder sister, shall I ask her?"

"It's no use asking her," said Matilda; "for she can't, in the first place; and she wouldn't, in the second."

"My dear, what is all this about?" said Mrs. Usherwood, sailing up to the piano-forte. "Dear Matilda, why don't you go on? You know Miss Grant," she whispered, "is so excessively fond of music."

"I don't care if she is," said Matilda, pettishly. "I don't see why I am always to be made the slave to entertain Miss Grant."

"But it's not only Miss Grant," entreated the young lieutenant, "but to please me."

The young lieutenant was the second son of an Irish viscount. The Miss Usherwoods were very proud, and so was Mrs. Usherwood, of having got him to their parties. Matilda was all graciousness to him, at least, whatever she might be to others; besides, she reckoned him her own admirer.

"But I really can't sing this song, mamma, that he's bothering me about. I really can't play the accompaniment—it's too hard."

"Where's Lucy?"

"Oh, she's playing cards with old Colonel Prendergrass! She wouldn't come away to save my life."

The mother glanced that way, and was satisfied.

"But do try it yourself—now do!" pleaded the lieutenant.

"But when I tell you I can't!"

"Oh, now I think of it," said Mrs. Usherwood, "stay a moment, Matilda! I'll find somebody who, I dare say, can play the accompaniment."

And she went up to Angela, who was now sitting perfectly alone.

"Miss Nevil, you play pretty well on the piano, I know. I wish you'd just step this way, and go through the accompaniment of 'La Gioja,' which Matilda wants to sing!"

She rose at once, as bidden, and feeling very oddly at this first initiation into the part assigned to her of a sort of domestic puppet, who was to speak or be silent, go or come, at the behest of others; yet, conscious how excessively disobliging and out of place any hesitation upon her part would appear, she moved toward the piano-forte.

The crowd of gentlemen fell back as she approached, and gazed upon her with great surprise and admiration; while Matilda eyed the beautiful girl from head to foot with a countenance expressive of any thing rather than satisfaction, and a sort of wondering questioning in her eye, as much as to say, "And who on earth have we here?"

The deep mourning which Angela wore concealed the simplicity, not to say poverty, of her toilet. For any thing Miss Matilda knew, she might be a lady as well as herself; and she certainly did not want so young and so beautiful a lady to come forward and take her place at the piano-forte—to trespass, perhaps, upon her preserves.

She seemed to wait for an introduction, but, seeing that none was made, and that Miss Nevil came up to the piano-forte, saying, simply—

"Is this the accompaniment I am to play?"

Matilda turned round to her mother for explanation, while the young lieutenant bent down his head, and began to talk assiduously to the new performer.

"Your sisters' new governess, that's all! Make yourself easy, my dear!" And Mrs. Usherwood glided away.

"Can you play it, do you think?" said Matilda, bluntly, now returning to the piano-forte. "It's very hard."

"I think I can manage it," turning the leaves over and looking at the music; "but it is difficult to accompany a person well that one has not been accustomed to hear sing. I hope I shall not put you out."

"Well, only do your best."

The fingers running brilliantly over the keys (it was so long since she had enjoyed the pleasure of touching them), and a short but

beautiful little prelude, was the only answer to this; and then the song began.

The power of natural genius in music is a gift almost incredible: the effects produced by it are unaccountable, almost magical.

Every one who loved music in the room was attracted to the piano-forte. Miss Grant, though attentively listening, sat still, however, holding by the little Theresa's hand.

It was a very different description of music from any she had been accustomed to hear proceeding from that piano-forte. So much taste, truth, and musical feeling, in the accompaniment, that Matilda seemed to catch something of the same spirit, and her really fine and powerful voice was displayed to the greatest advantage. Her singing seemed quite unlike any thing that she had ever been known to produce before.

The song over, the applause was long and loud—almost the whole of it, however, according to the common course of such things, being directed to the young lady of the house; for Mrs. Usherwood having gone about whispering to all her guests that the young person who showed so great a talent for music was a new governess she had just been so fortunate as to engage for her younger daughters, the talents of one whose business it was to have talents were disregarded.

But there was one who bent his head down to her, his young and pleasant face coloring with admiration and pleasure, and said—

“How beautifully you do play! I have heard a good deal of music. My sisters are very fine players, I believe; they were pupils of Osborne's at Paris, and have lessons every spring from Madame Belville Oury. But I never heard any one play like you in my life.”

She turned up her face and thanked him for the little compliment, and more for the polite attention he showed. Politeness in such moments is really almost precious to the feelings.

He thought he had never seen such a sweet pair of eyes in his life before.

And, bending his pretty head still a little lower, he went on—

“You can not think how excessively, foolishly, fond of music I am. I play a little upon the piano-forte sometimes myself; but, with my great big hands, I don't know how it is, I can not bring out half the tone you do with those delicate little fingers of yours. There is an art in it which I never can comprehend. And my sisters, even, they do not do half so much with the instrument as you can.”

Her hands were upon the keys, and her answer to this was again a beautiful capriccio, improvised for the occasion. Restored to her piano-forte, flushed and excited by what had passed, she certainly felt a little inspired, and as if it were almost impossible to help playing; but she was also playing, because she did not well know what else to do. She did not quite feel sure whether she ought to rise from the instrument or not, and it was so awkward and disagreeable sitting there doing nothing, so she let her impatient fingers take their own way.

Before she had played half-a-dozen bars, there was a general silence, so strong is the power of truly beautiful music over almost every human ear. There are some airs—some tones—which no one can resist: even the passion for talking while music is going on will, in a few rare instances, yield to the irresistible enchantment.

The little crowd round the piano-forte fell back in mute attention; even Lucy and old Colonel Prendergrass turned, raised their heads, and laid down their cards. Miss Grant rose, and, with Theresa still in her hand, approached the instrument.

Angela had, however, soon finished her improvisation, and then took her hands from the keys, and looked round to see whether Miss Matilda was going to sing again.

The young lieutenant looked round, too; but Matilda had disappeared—offended, chagrined, and envious, she had sat down at the other end of the room.

“Never mind her,” whispered Lieutenant O’Hara (for that was his name), bending down again and addressing Angela. “She’s gone away; she’ll come and sing some more soon. Do, in the mean time, play us something else; if it be not troublesome and disagreeable to you, I mean.”

“Miss Nevil,” said Mrs. Usherwood, coming forward, “there is Miss Grant perfectly enchanted with your music, and asks me to introduce you to her, and I have promised her you will play her another piece.”

Angela rose, and was presented to Miss Grant, who, looking at her with an air of so much kindness that it made her very heart warm to her, said, politely—

“I am very fond of music, and it is a long time since I have heard any playing that gave me so much pleasure as yours. If it would not be asking too much, Miss Nevil, perhaps you will let me hear you once again.”

“Her name is Nevil, is it?” said the young lieutenant to himself.

"What a sweet, pretty name! and what a deuced pretty creature she is!"

"I shall have the greatest pleasure," said Angela, in reply to Miss Grant, sitting down to the instrument with the most cheerful alacrity, and looking ten times more charming for the pleasure she had just received. It was a relief from her new position, in which she still felt so awkward. To be introduced like any other young lady, and to be addressed with so much courtesy, she felt restored to her natural position. She was Captain Nevil's daughter again.

She sat down and played a wild, plaintive Scotch air—so wild, so sweetly plaintive, that it thrilled through the heart of most present; and then it was followed by one of those beautiful fantasias those intricacies of harmony long drawn out, the untwisting of which affords such strange gratification to the ear.

Miss Grant listened with much attention and evident pleasure, and this seemed to give the cue to others; for Miss Grant, you will observe, was a person of considerable importance in this circle, where wealth was almost every thing: so every body was, or affected to be, quite delighted. The young lieutenant was so, without affectation.

"Well," he said, when it was over, "I never heard such a delightful finger in my life! The air is exquisite, too? Where did you get it from? Some people get such charming music to play. I wish my sisters would. Well, I must not ask for any more, I suppose; but if *you* would, Miss Grant. . . . Every body does what you wish them, you know. Do ask her for another, Miss Grant—do!"

"I hope Matilda Usherwood is going to give us another song," was Joan's reply. "Mrs. Usherwood is asking her."

And so she was.

Mrs. Usherwood was endeavoring to persuade her offended and envious daughter to come forward again.

"Now, Matilda, how can you be so foolish! Every body is waiting to hear you sing. I can't think what's the matter with you this evening!" the mother was saying. "There is Mr. O'Hara looking round for you. Come along!"

"I'm sure he doesn't care the least in the world whether I sing or not!" was the young lady's reply, turning her back upon the piano-forte and upon her mother, and throwing herself backward in her chair, with a manner as resolved and obstinate as when a mule plants his fore feet before him.

"Now, Mr. O'Hara," said Mrs. Usherwood, going up to him, "do persuade dear Matilda to sing another song. She is so diffident,

dear creature; she never thinks any thing she can do worth hearing. Matilda, here's Mr. O'Hara beseeching you to sing!"

"Eh, madam?—yes; oh, I beg your pardon! Do, dear Miss Matilda, sing us one more song. You declare you won't? Nay, that is too cruel! Must I go down upon my knees again?" repeating the sort of half-ironical prostration. "No, you won't?—Very wrong!—now really—'pon honor!"

And he returned to the piano-forte again.

"She won't sing," said he, again bending down his head to Angela, and speaking in a low voice. "She's as obstinate as a mule, it's no use asking her: so you can give us one little thing more, if you will, you know. Do, pray, be so very good-natured. Do ask her, now, Miss Grant: won't you?"

"No," said Joan, who had lost nothing of her old sincerity, nothing of her old desire to do good to every body, and who had discernment to observe the storm of jealousy and ill will which was already brooding in Miss Matilda's gentle breast; "I should not think of trespassing upon Miss Nevil's good nature any further."

And so saying, she turned away from the piano-forte, and resumed her place by the withered, palsied, overdressed old lady, who was no other than her mother, our old friend Ellen.

Ellen, after her removal to Widdrington, had become, as might have been anticipated, a very grand lady, indeed; and as she was still of "no particular age," as Mrs. Mitten has it, and, moreover, very good-looking for that age, whatever it might be; and as her daughter never furnished her with matter of interest by making conquests—a thing she seemed to hold in absolute abhorrence—Ellen was obliged, in mere self-defense, to set about making conquests for herself. She had a good fortune of her own, for, after Michael's death, the whole of the money she had brought into the family had been restored to her; and she had contrived to captivate a certain Mr. Richard Vining, head of one of the manufacturing firms in the neighborhood of Norman's Bridge, and younger brother of the very Mrs. Usherwood in whose drawing-room you have now the honor to be.

Mr. Richard Vining possessed a villa situated at no great distance from the splendid one of Mr. Usherwood; and here, having no children, Ellen was allowed to display all her taste for finery of every description. She fitted up her house in the most expensive and luxurious manner that could be devised, and thought herself a really grand lady. This connection, and the near neighborhood of the two villas, had produced considerable intimacy between Mrs. Vining and

the family of the Usherwoods, in which, of course, Joan, in her frequent visits to her mother, took part. Indeed, it being generally known that Miss Grant was a person of very great wealth, without natural heirs, and it not being expected that she would marry, her acquaintance was much sought after by the world in general, and by the family of the Usherwoods in particular.

She seemed to be an object of general speculation and pillage. The pillage she resisted, for, though open-handed and generous-hearted as hand or heart could be, she was neither weak nor lavish in the expenditure of her large fortune, and well justified the opinion her grandfather had early formed of her.

She was neither to be duped nor flattered into wasting her money. The speculations, however, of those, even the most remotely connected with her, it was impossible to prevent; nor could she help the obsequious distinction with which it pleased the fathers and mothers of many a large family of children to treat her: and this was peculiarly the case in the present instance.

Mr. and Mrs. Usherwood, as my discerning friends will have discovered, were, in spite of all their ostentatious display of wealth, in reality, with their immense family, in somewhat embarrassed circumstances; and this exemplary wife and mother, as she considered herself, was always upon the watch to seize upon every advantage, and profit by every opportunity of getting any thing from any body which might present itself.

Upon this most auspicious connection through Mrs. Vining she founded great hopes, and, as well as her husband, had immediately fastened upon Miss Grant, and chosen to enroll her as among their nearest connections; and certainly they spared not any pains to establish their claim to such connection, by treating her, upon every occasion, with the most marked respect and deference—asking her advice upon all subjects when the slightest pretense for consulting her could be framed—speaking of her at all times as the most esteemed and valuable friend of the family—and playfully accustoming the children to call her Aunt Joan.

She understood these manœuvres perfectly: she did not encourage the flattery, but she did not altogether repel the intimacy. In so large a family, she thought opportunities might be afforded her of doing some real good, and her mother's near connection with them excited an interest in their welfare. She did in this instance as she was accustomed to do in so many, many others—she seized the occasion of being of service to her fellow-creatures, whether they particularly deserved her kindness or not. And in her quiet, judicious way, it is

astonishing, merely by attention to this simple rule, what a vast sum, of good she had during the course of her life effected.

The generous, energetic little girl, who, as a mere child, had accomplished so much for children a little younger than herself, still pursued, in conjunction with many more extended objects—of which, perhaps, something may be said hereafter—the same generous and benevolent plan.

No suffering fellow-creature, be his condition what it might, or of whatever description his suffering, was by her unheeded. Stranger or enemy, erring or criminal, she never passed by upon the other side. And thus it happened, that the great influence and power of interference, almost forced upon her by Mr. and Mrs. Usherwood's determination to make a near relation of her, instead of being contemptuously rejected, had been in some manner accepted by Miss Grant, as furnishing the means of averting some of the daily evils, and protecting some of the daily victims of the mistakes and errors, which she could not but observe in Mrs. Usherwood's system of government.

Fain would she, clear-sighted as she was, have used the influence she possessed in correcting those erroneous principles from whence these innumerable evils took rise; but this she found exceeded even her power. There is nothing people resent so much as the attempt to correct their principles of action; nothing to which they cling so obstinately as to their prejudices. Upon any given occasion they will, perhaps, endure to be told they are wrong; but the attempt to enlighten them as to the common source of their errors is certain to be a ground of offense.

In this instance, to attempt to alter Mrs. Usherwood's views would have been indeed as vain as to endeavor to move mountains; and the case was no better as regarded her elder daughters. The elder Miss Usherwoods' education had been completed before Miss Grant had become acquainted with them, and, intrenched behind a double defense of ill-temper and self-conceit, remonstrance or advice was equally lost upon them. Moreover, with that sort of inclination to rebellion, merely for rebellion's sake—not uncommon with girls of this description—they seemed to set themselves in opposition to their mother's wishes merely because they were her wishes, and voted Joan Grant a horrid bore, because they saw how much both parents respected and observed her. The elder Miss Usherwoods she therefore took very little notice of, but she was interested in the younger children; and the poor sick governess—victim of Mrs. Usherwood's unceasing demands upon a delicate and feeble con-

stitution—the difficulties and sufferings from which she was utterly incapable of conceiving—had been taken under her especial protection.

The refined and delicate appearance of Angela had excited her interest immediately. She was well aware of the difficulties so young a creature would have to contend with in this ill-regulated household, and mentally she constituted herself her protector.

Even so early as this first evening, she saw her in danger of falling a victim to the envious temper of Miss Matilda, who, as she knew well, would certainly, sooner or later, find the means of visiting upon her the present mortification.

Miss Grant had been a silent observer of all that was going on. The negligence with which the new governess was treated, was a matter too much of course to be made the subject of remark; but she was much struck with the composure which the young girl had maintained—and with her countenance and manner, so simple, so gentle, yet so dignified; equally free from jealous self-assertion as from servility—she began to feel more than usually interested about her. Well aware that a little notice from a person so highly regarded as herself would be the best service she could just now render her, she rose from her seat, and holding the little Theresa by the hand, crossed the room to where Angela was sitting alone.

Dismissed from the piano-forte as unceremoniously as she had been summoned there, she took a chair at no great distance, and was now engaged in turning over a portfolio of drawings which lay upon the table before her; Mr. O'Hara, from behind Miss Matilda's chair, where he had placed himself to make his peace—for he was really a good-natured young fellow, and did not like to vex any one, least of all a young lady who seemed to care for him—casting many a furtive glance toward the place where she sat.

Miss Grant drew a chair beside her, and said—

“I have brought your little charge back to you, Miss Nevil. I am very glad to see my friend Theresa in the drawing-room this evening. You are rather a pet of mine—are you not, Theresa? and I am always sorry when your headaches keep you away.”

This opening led to a conversation. Angela, gratified by this attention, which relieved her from a situation that as yet she was unaccustomed to, conversed with her usual spirit and intelligence, so that Miss Grant soon discovered she could be no ordinary person, and secretly rejoiced that Mrs. Usherwood had at last the eminent good fortune of placing her children in such apparently valuable hands.

"She is a daughter of Captain Nevil of the 64th—a most unquestionable gentlewoman," Mrs. Usherwood had whispered, with considerable satisfaction, as she pointed Angela out to Joan Grant's observation; and her deep mourning dress, the gravity of her youthful face, told, as Joan thought, the usual tale of the orphan daughter of some brave and unfortunate soldier obliged to eat the bread of dependence—nourishment which, in a family like this, at least, she could not without much pain reflect, might prove so very bitter.

She was, however, far too discreet, too wise, not to be well aware that any ill-judged interference in such a case—any vain lamentations over the evils that must be encountered—any romantic indulgence of those feelings which might indispose Angela for the duties of the condition to which her poverty had condemned her, would be most injurious and unkind; but she had been taught by the experience of a painful life the truth of that saying—"A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" and had learned how sweet a cordial to the soul is a friend in the hour of adversity; and that friend she at once resolved to endeavor to prove—and those words, as the season might present itself, to speak.

She had been a frequent guest in Mrs. Usherwood's schoolroom during the reign of the last ill-fated governess, and had observed, with considerable anxiety, the singularly unpromising dispositions of some of the children; so that she was fully aware of the struggle it must prove, especially for one so young and apparently inexperienced as Miss Nevil, to maintain her ground against the opposition, and her spirits amid the host of evils she would have to encounter. And this, united to an approbation of her sentiments and manners, which was increasing every moment, gave that peculiar gentleness and kindness to her tones, which had made Joan such a treasure of consolation, and such an object of love, to those who knew her.

Angela was little likely to resist such feelings: she found her affections already attracted in a strange manner, and looked up at that good, that kind, that sensible face, with confidence, as to some benign and superior intelligence.

Life is not a mere chapter of accidents. Such unlooked-for sources of support in cases of extremity—such sudden fountains in the wilderness, must have come under the experience of every one.

"I do not know what new laws and institutions, Miss Nevil, you mean to introduce into your schoolroom," Joan had ended by saying, as she rose to go away, "but I have long been a permitted visitor there, more particularly during Miss Freeman's reign; and if you will allow me, I feel very much tempted to continue the practice.

I believe there is no fear of Mrs. Usherwood making any objection, she is so kind as to let me consider myself rather a privileged person in this family."

"Oh, do come!" said the little Theresa, with beseeching eyes. "Do let her come, Miss Nevil. Miss Freeman always did, and was so glad when we heard her steps upon the stairs. Wasn't she, Aunt Joan?"

Aunt Joan only patted her cheek, and called her a prattler, and said, "You see Miss Nevil, Theresa adds her testimony to confirm what I say."

"I shall be so excessively glad; it will be such a very, very great pleasure to me," said Angela.

But she cast a hesitating glance at Mrs. Usherwood; in spite of what Miss Grant had just said, she did not know how far she was to consider herself at liberty to receive visitors into her school-room.

"Oh!" said Joan, understanding her look at once, "I will settle all with Mrs. Usherwood: you are quite right to require her permission."

The permission was granted with all the graciousness, and more than graciousness, with which such a petition from Miss Grant was certain to be received; and after that Miss Grant and her mother went away.

And now the young lieutenant, who had watched for her departure with some impatience, quitting the back of Miss Matilda's chair, came forward, and immediately seized upon and occupied the seat just left vacant.

"I am so glad to have got it!" said he, with his usual bluntness. "I thought that precious Miss Grant would never go away. Every body thinks so much of her: she's not pretty, do you think? I wanted to talk to you a little more about your delightful playing. Where were you taught? I never heard such execution, or, better than that, such exquisite taste before."

Angela was about to answer; but, turning her face that way, she caught a view of Miss Matilda's, filled with such an expression of envy and ill-humor, that, quite confounded, she cast down her eyes, and could only say—

"I have had no masters—my mother taught me."

"What a wonderful woman your mother must have been then! And now I am going, humbly to beg your pardon if I am intrusive, yet to take the liberty of asking you a question, which I very much want to have answered: Where does your father live? and

where do you come from { for you are quite a stranger to us all here."

"My father is not living; I arrived here only this morning. You do not seem to be aware that I am here as governess to the young ladies."

"Oh!" exclaimed he, as if in great and not very pleasant surprise, and pushing his chair a little back as if to consider her more completely, "I really thought you had been any thing but that!" Then, drawing his chair again to her side, he added, with his usual inconsiderate frankness, "I wonder Mrs. Usherwood ventures to have such a dangerous person in her house? Ay," added he to himself, "I'd see her hanged before I'd bring such a pretty governess as that among my unmarried daughters. I don't wonder Miss Matilda looks so like a thunder-cloud."

CHAPTER XXV.

But anxious cares the pensive nymph opprest,
And hostile passions labored in her breast.

POPE.

MATILDA was sitting in her mother's dressing-room. She was absolutely crying with vexation.

"I think it's the most cruel and unheard-of piece of unkindness and injustice," she said; "I think you must have done it on purpose to vex me. But I never was a favorite with you, and that I've known long ago."

"My dear child! my sweet Matilda!" began the mother, apologizing for herself, as such mothers nowadays are often obliged to do before such daughters, "I'm sure I am excessively sorry, and all that, and as vexed about it as you can be. It never entered into my head, certainly, that she could come into competition with you, or assuredly I would not have engaged her. But don't vex yourself, child. We know Mr. O'Hara is very wild and very young; it was the mere fancy of the moment; and if he sees no more of her, depend upon it, he'll forget her."

"I'm not so sure of that," put in Lucy; "for Matilda made herself so excessively disagreeable to-night, and looked in such wretched contrast to that pretty Miss Nevil's good-natured, cheer-

ful face, that, if I am not mistaken, she has left an impression behind her which the young gentleman will not easily forget. Why, Colonel Prendergrass himself observed it, and asked what made my sister look so cross."

"You're excessively ill-natured, Lucy, I know of old," was Matilda's answer, "and always find some disagreeable thing or other to say to me. It's all because you have got the voice of a frog, and I can sing pretty well; I know that well enough: but I wish you'd keep to your old Colonel, and not concern yourself with my affairs. One thing, however, mamma, I do hope—that you will put a stop to Miss Nevil's coming down and making her fine appearance in the drawing-room when we have parties, giving herself airs just as if she was one of us; that I do hope you will do."

"Why, you ill-natured, jealous thing!" reiterated Lucy, who certainly took a very spiteful pleasure in vexing her sister. "What! would you have mamma not let her come and play, when it's plain her playing will be the greatest attraction our drawing-room can possibly have? Colonel Prendergrass, when I told him who she was, said he hoped she would come down and play every evening."

"And nobody's to care for my singing! Very well; I'm sure I don't want to sing: at least I shall be spared from the trouble of entertaining the company for you all—I always hated it. But I don't think it very kind of mamma, or very wise of you, Lucy; for if Colonel Prendergrass takes to listening to Miss Nevil's playing, he may take to listening to Miss Nevil's fine talking, as Mr. O'Hara does. *He* may draw contrasts between faces as well as other people; and I know who can look ugly as well as ill-natured, which, thank my stars, at *least* I never do. You'll see how you like it then."

"I think, my dears," said Mrs. Usherwood, now assuming her usual important air of decision, "that there is something in what you both of you urge, and so I shall arrange matters with a view to both sides of the question. I shall desire Miss Nevil not to appear with the children for the *present*," said she, with emphasis, looking at Matilda, "unless we just send for her down to play when we happen to want it; and that shall not be oftener than you yourself like, pet," concluded Mrs. Usherwood, patting her daughter's cheek, who was, indeed, an especial favorite with her, seeing that she was much the best looking of the whole sisterhood.

"So don't spoil your pretty mouth with pouting, Matty—it's not becoming, believe me."

"I wished she could see herself in the glass, sometimes," laughed Lucy.

“ You’d be glad if you could see what I see, when you look there,” retorted Matilda, recovering her spirits at this arrangement of the matter in question.

It does not seem as if this banishment from the drawing-room would prove any great privation to Angela. Most of us would think she would have preferred the quiet and independence of her own schoolroom, where she reigned almost undisturbed, to this sort of tolerated association with society, wherein she was scarcely allowed to claim a place, and in which she found she was not to expect to take a part.

But it was not altogether so.

A young girl of her age wants recreation and change, to preserve her health, both of body and mind. The spirits, as yet unsettled, require to be stimulated by the sense of enjoyment; quiet, which is rest to the old, is wearisome, to the young. A proper, wholesome proportion of pleasure, if it can be got, ought to be procured for them; but change of ideas, in any case.

After the long, wearisome fatigues of that routine of lessons which she had undertaken, so exhausting to the spirits—after that never-ending repetition of the same sentences—those same rules of grammar—those same chains of verbs—those same dull skeletons of history—crowned by the irritation, almost amounting to the torture, of the musical lessons—for the children, deficient in musical ear as in all other of the finer gifts of nature, were more than usually tiresome to teach—after the contentions with the pert, malicious Selina—the vain endeavor to stimulate to exertion the stubborn and indolent nature of Elizabeth—the exertion of voice and authority necessary to control the high, undisciplined tempers and rude sports of the three younger, and the care to shield the gentle Theresa from being oppressed by them all—after days thus spent, it was not alone rest for the body which she required, but rest for the spirit: *recreation*—new ideas—change—variety—were indispensable.

She was still so young, that the appetite for new ideas—the desire, the natural craving, for society with those of her age, almost demanded to be satisfied. She had not, she could not, possess that store of thoughts, of experiences, of reminiscences—she could never have felt that weariness of life which renders solitude so grateful.

These people, in their thoughtless selfishness, were going to deprive her of the only means, scanty and imperfect as they were, of obtaining this refreshment so much needed. And while they are

thus employed over Mrs. Usherwood's dressing-room fire, unclasping the gorgeous bracelets, taking the flowers from their hair, and at last, consigning themselves to their maids, are prepared for their luxurious beds, what is she engaged in upon her hard, narrow, uncomfortable little pallet? she whose happiness or comfort never occupies one of their thoughts?

She had just been kneeling down, and commending her inmost heart to God, thanking Him for the home He had afforded in her need, and for the happy evening she had spent; for, after all, it *had* been a happy evening.

The animation of the scene; the pleasure of playing, for the first time in her life, upon a very fine piano-forte; the general admiration which her playing had excited; the sympathy and good will with which she felt herself regarded by the company, even the good-natured flattery of the pretty young lieutenant himself; and above all, the happiness of having made acquaintance with Miss Grant, filled her with gratitude and self-congratulation.

That Miss Matilda looked cross, she had observed, but she did not care very much about that.

After offering, in all humility of heart, her grateful tribute, she had laid her head upon her pillow; but she did not feel inclined to sleep; so there she lay, engaged in reviewing her position, and reflecting upon its duties.

The most earnest, the most sincere, the most truthful desire to discharge those duties well, was uppermost in her mind; almost terrified at the task before her, for which her youth and inexperience seemed to render her so unfit. With girls but a few years younger than herself placed under her control—girls, as one day's experience had sufficed to show, requiring the most determined and judicious hand to counteract the evil dispositions which had already acquired such a sad ascendancy; with little children so rude, violent, and spoiled, to keep in order, and one poor little delicate being to protect—to mend their hearts, improve their manners, and teach them the multitude of things there were to be learned; what a task before her!

How should she ever accomplish it? How should she be able to perform it well?

There she lay—yet rather stimulated than discouraged by the difficulty of her undertaking—not desponding, but reflecting—laying out plans, considering of methods, and arranging proceedings; never once thinking of herself, of her own happiness, or her own interests. It was two o'clock before she fell asleep, and she must be

down in the school room at six. The under-housemaid had promised to call her at a quarter past five.

Oh, how sleepy she was when the housemaid came !

Sleepy as a little child.

CHAPTER XXVI.

With success

Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,

Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content.

WORDSWORTH.

A QUARTER past five, upon a rainy October morning, and the candle lighted by the maid flaring upon her tiny table, and she rubbing her eyes, and combating with delicious, overwhelming, irresistible sleep, and thinking she is at home at the farmhouse, and that the wind is roaring among the walnut-trees ; and then she drops down upon her pillow again, and dreams of Margaret ; and then she suddenly starts up, and remembers that she is no longer her own mistress, and has promised to be down for the music lesson.

She dresses as fast as she can, but so confused, so dizzy with sleep, she scarcely knows what she is about. The under-housemaid comes in again, cross at having to mount so many stairs from her business of cleaning the back-hall, and fastens her dress ; and then, as the clock strikes six, she enters the schoolroom, where, however, a fire is lighted, at which Selina presently joins her.

Orders had been issued by Mrs. Usherwood that Selina should be down for the music lesson one half-hour before the usual time ; and that this half hour of early rising should be taken by the six children in turns, so that every one would have to make the disagreeable exertion once a week. Consequently some maid or other must be up half an hour earlier than had been the custom, every day but Sunday ; so that there was a very large portion of ill-humor diffused among all the children and all their maids.

Every one was vexed at Angela, as the innocent cause. Poor Angela ! nobody recollected that she alone was to make this exertion every day.

Servants know every thing. How it is, or whence it is, or by what means, it is vain for those not initiated in this domestic freemasonry to conjecture. But the fact is unquestionable.

And the servants at Mrs. Usherwood's knew as exactly the terms upon which the new governess had been engaged, and were as well aware of the poverty which had obliged her to accept the condition of this additional half-hour's toil, as that lady could be herself.

And if that lady held her twice as cheap for her poverty, you may be sure the servants held her five times, and even ten times, as cheap. Servants, as I have often remarked, take the tone of the families to which they belong, in a wonderful degree; and the servants of this family exaggerated upon the base ideas of their superiors as regarded the *merits* of wealth.

They despised the poor officer's daughter for her poverty; and, according to their notions of such things, hated her still more for undertaking to do for her salary what had never been done in that house before. And all, as they reasoned, at their expense, as they had, one or other of them, to get up like slaves half an hour earlier every morning—because of *her* bargain.

So a general ill will was excited against the poor young creature, which showed itself by a more than usual proportion being displayed of that negligent insolence with which servants, if not closely looked after, are apt to treat governesses.

Selina came down pouting and looking dark as midnight—at once angry and rebellious. It was a chilly morning, certainly, and her hands were red with the cold; and her maid had done nothing but abuse Miss Nevil all the time she had been dressing her. So Selina came in with a resolution to be as tiresome as she possibly could.

“And give her enough of teaching *her* music,” as she said.

“Selina,” said Angela, as she opened the door, looking at the clock upon the chimneypiece, “you are ten minutes behind your time. I am afraid your mamma would not be pleased; she makes so great a point of our being punctual.”

To this Selina condescended to make no answer, but walking up to the fire began, while looking very cross, to warm and rub her red hands.

This was allowed for some time, at last Angela said—

“Come, my dear, this must not go on any longer; cold or warm, we must go to business.”

“I can't play with my hands frozen to death, and I won't!” answered Selina. “I can't think why you pretended to teach us music. I like Monsieur Delaure very much, and I'm sure I shall never learn any thing from you; for I am resolved never to try, and that's the truth.”

“Then,” said Angela, turning from the piano-forte, where she had

been arranging her music-books, "I must appeal to Mrs. Usher-wood."

"Oh, yes!" said Selina, "you'll begin to tell tales of me, I dare say; and then mamma'll be so angry. She can be terrible, when she's angry."

"I shall tell no tales, as you call it—it is not my way, unless your disobedience to your mother's commands and to my orders make it necessary. But we had better understand each other at once, Selina. I am here to do my duty, and I am accustomed to do my duty. I look very young, I dare say, to you; and you, perhaps, imagine that you will be more than a match for me: you will not find it so. Go to your piano-forte at once, and let me have no more trouble upon the subject."

She who had confronted a wild and powerful animal in his fury was not of the stuff to give way before an insolent girl.

She stood there in attitude so firm—her bright, clear eye bent upon the face of the young rebel before her with such an air of determination, that Selina felt herself subdued. She had never been treated in this way before; she felt—she knew not how—abashed and vanquished.

And she sat down to her piano-forte.

"If you knew," said Angela, as she placed herself by her side, "how much pain you would spare yourself and me, if you would assist instead of counteracting me in my effort to discharge my duty, I think you would do it."

This word "duty," this sort of invincible necessity, implied in the way Angela uttered it, was as a new idea to Selina. She was a very clever and intelligent, and not really a bad-hearted girl, though so sadly ruined by evil education and associations.

There was something in Angela she could not help liking, after all. So she began to play.

But, oh! what a wearisome thing was the lesson!

Every thing required attention. The method of holding the hands—the method of reading every note; it was all wrong, and demanded correction, in a way which none but those accustomed to musical tuition can easily comprehend, but which no one possessing the least pretense to musical taste could overlook.

Selina's temper in a very short time gave way.

Every remark was contradicted, every direction questioned.

Mr. Delaure, she was certain, taught her so. Mr. Delaure never found fault with her. When, in truth, Mr. Delaure had long given the case up in despair; and, disgusted with the young lady's temper,

and with her total want of a musical ear, had, in no very well-principled manner, taken his guinea, and suffered her to follow her own course pretty much as she pleased.

"You are my pupil now, and not Mr. Delaure's, Selina. Attend to what I say."

"As if you should know better than Mr. Delaure!" And then playing the disputed passage in a manner directly in contradiction to Miss Nevil's directions.

"Oh, well!" said Angela, rising from her seat, "I see you are determined to quarrel, and the sooner it comes to an issue the better. I command you to play that passage in the way I have directed; and if you refuse, there is an end of the lesson, and I shall at once carry my complaints to Mrs. Usherwood."

But Selina sat pouting before the piano-forte, and her fingers refused to move.

"Very well," said the young governess, rising with as much calmness in her manner as she could possibly command; but, after all, with her pulse beating, her lips quivering, and her own young temper, like that of a high-spirited young steed, standing greatly in need of the reins, and feeling, as the most experienced must do with children such as these, terribly at fault; "I must apply then to Mrs. Usherwood." "But what if Mrs. Usherwood should not support my authority?" thought she: "what am I to do?"

"Well, I am sure, my dear Miss Nevil, I can't pretend to enter into the merits and demerits of the case; and I really am too much occupied and engaged to be able to put on my robes and take the bench, and judge between you and a set of naughty children. Really, you ought to be able to manage them yourself!"

"Then I am to consider myself in future as at liberty to enforce discipline by what means I may think necessary?" said Angela.

"To be sure you are; only, pray let me hear no more about it. You engaged to teach the children music, I believe, and you play very well yourself; so, pray let me have no more trouble upon the subject."

"Then Miss Selina will not come down into the drawing-room to-night?"

"Nay, positively, I can not consent to that. I like to see Selina in the drawing-room, and so does her papa. She's so droll and entertaining when she likes it. I wish you would think of any other punishment."

"I can think of none that would be so effectual."

"Well, I am in haste now," said Mrs. Usherwood, who was just going out shopping: "settle it as you please; only I am sure you must let Selina come down into the drawing-room, for her papa will miss her so much."

Tedious, and to me disgusting, it would be to tell the daily school-room battles that took place.

She was almost in despair. Her spirits and strength began already to fail with her unceasing efforts; and yet there seemed no progress made.

She reproached herself. "So short a time," said she, "and already to feel discouraged, and to find the task too hard for me! Ah, my little ones!"

She felt the absolute necessity for perseverance. And yet confined to her schoolroom—very seldom invited down to make one in the drawing-room—the weather rainy and bad, so as to render exercise out of doors difficult to obtain; and, when obtained, affording little or no enjoyment—some change she perceived was absolutely necessary.

Were it but for a few hours, some refreshment she must have.

She had expected every day that the family would remove to their town-house; and, anxious to avoid expense, and indeed not to break, even by a day's absence, upon her schoolroom routine until habit had confirmed her authority, she had not yet asked to visit the children.

She heard of them frequently from Nurse and Mrs. Levet; all was going on well—there was no necessity for her going there.

But all at once this longing, this necessity for a little change, came over her. She would go and see them.

She had stipulated, as a condition, to be allowed to do so now and then. She had now been five weeks in the house—they seemed to her five ages. She would summon courage, and ask leave to go to-day.

Mrs. Usherwood appeared very much surprised, and not a little annoyed, at what she seemed to regard as the great presumption of the request; but when she turned to Angela, she saw her looking so jaded and pale, that she thought it best to accede to her wishes.

"I hope she's not going to be sickly, like Miss Freeman," thought she; "for she's really a treasure."

"But how do you mean to go, Miss Nevil? In the Wimbledon omnibus?"

"I suppose so; but I must first write to Mrs. Levet, and ask her to meet me; for I do not know my way in the least about town."

"Very improper indeed, then," said Mrs. Usherwood, coldly, at this, "for you to go to town by yourself! You don't know what you might get into. No," added Mrs. Usherwood, partly because she really was anxious, partly because she hated her governess to have holidays; "if that be the case I must retract my permission: you must have patience till we all go to town, which we shall do in ten days, and then Mrs. Levet can come and fetch you."

Angela sighed, and retired.

She felt so wearied, so sick, so spiritless, that afternoon.

It had been such a worrying morning—a morning of almost uninterrupted contention with these ill-behaved and unmanageable children; they seemed to be worse than ever that day. How *should* she be able to persevere?

The schoolroom was now empty, for the children were all gone out, having been allowed, as a very rare indulgence, to make some little excursion with one of their eldest sisters; and she was sitting in her deserted schoolroom, enjoying, at least, the luxury of a moment's quiet: but her nerves were shaken and enfeebled, her head was aching, and her pulse fluttering; even the reaction was almost painful.

The dread that she should never, never find strength of body for her task, haunted her.

Was this the life, then, of a governess? The only life in her power to choose? The only means possible by which she could earn her bread? Oh, Carteret! Carteret!

Had he deserted her? or had she lost him?

That question would still perpetually recur.

Should she ever, ever see him more? Was that fond desire she had once indulged of his connection with Tom Levet a mysterious intimation of truth? or were the conclusions at which she had once arrived but too just, and he was gone forever? In either case he must, she began to think, be equally lost to her; for if living, even *her* faith in his constancy must yield to the conviction, from his long, unaccountable silence.

But she had little time now to dwell upon such thoughts; the cares, and troubles, and fatigues of the day were too pressing: yet still, at times, her thoughts would revert to other days, and sadly and mournfully contrast that tranquil life of the farmhouse with her kind and gentle Margaret, and the brief but exquisite few weeks passed with Carteret, and her present irksome condition.

And she sat at this moment lost in sorrowful recollections, with her head leaning on her hand, her eyes vacantly gazing on a few

chestnut-trees which grew near the window, looking, poor thing, very desolate and sorrowful, when there was a knock at the door.

"May I come in?" and the door opened, and Miss Grant entered. "I have been a very long time, Miss Nevil," she said, coming up and offering her hand, remarking at the same time to herself, with much compassion, the great change which had already taken place for the worse in the young girl's appearance—"I have been a very long time in profiting by your permission to visit you here; but business obliged me to return home suddenly, and I have been detained much longer than I expected; I only came back to Mrs. Vining's yesterday. How are the children? All well? And Theresa and yourself?" Looking kindly at her. "You don't look quite so blooming as you did in the drawing-room the evening I first saw you."

Angela smiled. It was a smile of sadness, yet not of complaint. She only said—

"I think I am not quite well to-day. Will you not sit down, Miss Grant, in my little castle? I am so glad to see somebody," said she, ingenuously.

"I'm very glad you like to see me, at least," was Joan's reply. "But as to seeing somebody, as far as I am acquainted with the ways of Mr. Usherwood's family, there is scarcely a day passes without there being somebody to be seen. But I do not wonder your appearance in the drawing-room does not give you much pleasure."

"The drawing-room! I have only been down there three times. I suppose it is not the custom. The young ladies—that is, Selina and Elizabeth—have gone down without me. Theresa has stayed to keep me company."

"Why, you do not mean to say you have had no society but that of your own thoughts and of those troublesome children?" said Joan, with astonishment.

Angela shook her head, but said nothing.

"No wonder you look pale and wearied; the merely living so entirely to yourself must be enough to produce that effect. But where are the children now?"

"They are gone out upon a visit to Mrs. Sutherland's."

"Then let me take you out for a little air with me. It is quite fine—almost warm—to-day. My open carriage is at the door. We will have a drive round the Common. You have never once been upon the Common since you came here, I dare say."

"But what will Mrs. Usherwood say?" hesitated Angela, whose cheek already was kindling and eye brightening at the thought of this little excursion.

"Oh, leave that to me; I will settle it with Mrs. Usherwood. I should like so much to take you out, if you would like to come."

"And I should so like to come."

They had gone some way.

The air was fresh and delightful; and Angela enjoyed this pleasure with a relish which privation alone can give.

Miss Grant had been talking to her in a manner that had quite won her heart and confidence. Indeed, these two characters seemed to run together with that sort of natural sympathy which is in friendship what love at first sight is in love.

For the oppressed, the suffering, the weak, and the wanting, we know Joan had a natural kindness; and she was charmed by Angela's countenance and manners. Besides, she had never quite conquered her *penchant* for the beautiful, poor Joan!

"I have not been very happy myself," she said, in reply to a remark of Angela's, "so it would be unpardonable in me not to feel for the unhappy. And I have had to struggle so long with my own inclinations, and have found it so very difficult to find contentment in the way marked out to me, instead of in the way I would have chosen, that I can feel most truly for those who are engaged in a struggle like my own. But yours has been a much harder fate than mine. Yet," and she took her hand, "be of good courage; it is astonishing what strength is given to those who ask it where they ought; and what comforts and compensations attend upon the severest trials. I hope to be some comfort to you in yours; for if you want a friend, you have found one in me."

And so she proved.

While staying at Mrs. Vining's, she visited Mrs. Usherwood's schoolroom many times a-week. She took her young friend out for air and exercise; she supported her spirits by her fluent conversation, and soothed and strengthened her mind by sympathy and encouragement.

But after all, members of separate families, engaged in different occupations, Miss Grant's time almost completely absorbed by various claims of duty and business, Angela was still left too much to herself.

She, however, managed to sustain the part she had undertaken with this assistance.

Soon after this, Mr. Usherwood's family adjourned to town, and settled in Lowndes Square.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Hence let me haste into the midwood shade,
And on the dark green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream . . . lie at large,
And sing the glories of the circling year."

THOMSON.

WE will leave Angela in Lowndes Square for the present, passing her time in a close and small schoolroom which looks out upon a little square court, if court be the name for leads about twenty feet each way, and surrounded by the walls belonging to the back of the lofty houses which encompass it on all sides.

We will leave her still persevering and indefatigable, battling with her own weariness, subduing her own irritation and impatience, endeavoring to guide these intractable spirits committed to her care in the way they should go, and maintaining, young as she was, the fight against evil with undaunted courage.

I must forsake her for the present, because I want to introduce you to some new characters with whom it is necessary you should become acquainted; though I can not hope, and, in truth, hardly desire, that they should interest you so much as those you are going, for the present, to leave.

Fasten on, therefore, the wings of Icarus, if you please, and fly with me over land and sea, for I am about to carry you over the far-stretching hills and fair valleys of France, across the blue Mediterranean, and to plant you finally upon the shores of Sicily—at Palerme in fact, and to introduce you to Mr. Thomas Levet's master.

He is, according to an old custom of his, idling away life, and wasting the inestimable treasure, time, under the sun of Sicily, and amid the beautiful mountains which skirt the Bay of Palermo, just as had been his custom to idle away his time in England.

His pencil was his principal occupation, varied at intervals by the old habit of desultory reading, and writing snatches of very good poetry. Desultory reading is far better than no reading at all, certainly, but it is the first recipe in the world for cheating conscience and soothing indolence by the pretense of employment.

He loved to lie in some nook of those lovely hills which commanded a view of the rich and beautiful plain of the Conca d'Oro. in which

the loveliest of European cities stands. Sometimes he would be satisfied with merely gazing upon the magnificent features of this incomparable bay, and watching the light feluccas as they floated like sea-birds upon the blue waters of the Mediterranean: sometimes he would endeavor to fix the beauteous picture in one of his unrivaled sketches: sometimes to paint it in harmonious words, as the light sails glided away before him, and the snowy sea-birds sported in the bright, clear air.

Then, dissatisfied with the vain attempt to give durability to the fleeting beauties of the landscape, he would fling pencils and pen impatiently away, and, thrown listlessly upon the rocks, would lie for hours listening to the low murmur of the waters, the gentle voice of the sea-breeze, or the distant song of the Sicilian fishermen, lost in all those delicious reveries of which he had become more than ever fond.

Those dangerous reveries, those vague dreams of the imagination, which threatened to enfeeble his mind, and render a character formed originally for better and sterner things a mere visionary child of fancy, only calculated for worlds of a very different description from that in which we are destined to exist. This young gentleman who had so many faults, but who was gifted with so many rare and admirable qualities, was no other person than that very master of Mr. Thomas Levet, whose decision and determination of character had exercised so beneficial an effect upon that gentleman's career.

His name, you must know, was Vavasour, and his father and mother were called Lord and Lady Missenden.

He was, at this time, residing with them at Palermo; but, before this, he had been staying in England. One day, upon his return from a long walk—he was very fond of long walks, be it said—he had received a letter from his mother, acquainting him that his father was considered to be upon his death-bed, and beseeching him to set out and join her without an instant's delay.

This summons had been a source of very great embarrassment to Mr. Vavasour, who had his own particular reasons, at that time, for wishing to remain in England; but it was impossible to hesitate a moment in obeying the urgent injunctions of the letter, and he resolved to set forward that very night, especially as, if he did not, he should lose the next packet for Naples.

So he ordered his luggage to be packed, and as there was no servant at the place where he then was that he thought it advisable to take with him, he resolved to trust to the chapter of accidents, and provide himself in London. Having given his orders, he locked him-

self up in his room, where, as his servants imagined, he employed himself in writing, which, in fact, was the case.

Having finished his letter, and inclosed it in a parcel which contained a good many bank-notes, he let himself out by the window of the room where he sat.

He had just time to hurry to a little obscure village, at no great distance from the house : there he found a messenger to carry his dispatch. He told this man that the packet was of the greatest importance, and that he must take great care to deliver it safely, in which case he would be handsomely rewarded ; but that there would be no answer required of any sort.

An hour after this he departed.

The faithless messenger was not proof against the temptation to curiosity thus offered. The packet seemed large ; he contrived to examine it, and was astonished at the sum it contained. The opportunity for appropriating it all, without a chance of discovery, was irresistible ; the man destroyed the letter, pocketed the notes, took his passage upon the top of the next coach to London, and was never more heard of in those parts.

Mr. Vavasour hastened to London too, whence, having secured the services of Mr. Levet, he sailed for Sicily, and arrived, in due time, at Palermo. Here he found his father still alive, and as it would appear, slowly recovering, but in that state of health that it was impossible to leave him ; and here he remained therefore, very ill at ease, wasting his time dreaming among the rocks, and looking for letters from England every post, which letters never arrived.

Idle as he was, he did not spare pen and paper himself ; nor, indolent as he was, did he neglect regularly to walk from his father's palace into the town to post his letters himself ; but the oddest thing was that he seemed never satisfied with his direction ; the letters were addressed to the same person, but now to one post-town, now to another : it was plain he did not well know what was the proper post-town at which to address his letters. Whether they arrived at their destination at all, is a matter of doubt ; some said they did, but were returned unopened by those into whose hands they chanced to fall, because the postage was heavy and the proper direction by which to forward them had been mislaid : let the cause have been what it might, Mr. Vavasour certainly suffered a daily disappointment, and returned from each visit to the post-office with a brow still more and more clouded.

He was kept by the nature of his father's malady, as I have said previously, in that uncomfortable state of suspense which renders it

impossible to take any decisive measure. To leave him and forsake his mother, under the circumstances, was not to be thought of; his father might die any day, or upon any day might rally so far as to be placed on shipboard, in order to return, as he most impatiently desired to do, to his own country. In the mean time, fresh perplexities arose.

You may perhaps remember that Mr. Levet, in his letter to his wife, spoke of his old master, Mr. Darby, as being settled at Palermo with his family. This family consisted of his wife, who was a cousin of Lady Missenden, and his only daughter, the fair Augusta Darby.

With this very Augusta Darby Mr. Vavasour had, in his earlier years, through the management of his mother and Mrs. Darby, got entangled in a sort of understood engagement of marriage.

Lady Missenden and Mrs. Darby were, as I have told you, first cousins, and had, from their children's earliest infancy, formed one of those unwise schemes for their future union which silly and romantic people are so fond of arranging, and which the course of actual life is almost certain to disappoint.

Miss Darby, it seems, was the heiress, independently of her parents, to a very handsome fortune, left to her by a distant connection of her father's family. into the enjoyment of which she was to enter so soon as she should come of age; and Lord Missenden's affairs not being in the very best order, it would be a very great object to secure this fortune for the heir of the title.

Mrs. Darby loved her cousin, and, having no son of her own, doated upon Vavasour, who certainly had been a very handsome and engaging child, and was now a very handsome and interesting young man; and she gladly lent herself to Lady Missenden's plans.

Unfortunately, however, the inclinations of the young people did not seem particularly propitious to such schemes. They treated one another with considerable outward indifference, at least. The young man was careless; the young lady, satirical and contemptuous; and she carried the *hauteur* of her manner to such a point that already having made up his mind that he and Augusta Darby were particularly ill-suited to each other, he speedily became persuaded that the young lady was of the same opinion; and, indeed, calculated so securely upon this, as the true state of her feelings, that he never took the trouble to enter into an explanation even with his mother upon the subject, being well content to let this tacit engagement die away of itself.

He was enervated by habits of indolence, you well know; and

the idea of entering into a contest with his high-spirited and domineering mother upon the subject was quite abhorrent to him. He was much better pleased to let things take their course, and to rely upon Miss Darby's indifference, rather than, by declaring off on his side, offend the young lady's pride and delicacy, and offend every one of their mutual relations besides.

Thus matters had been standing for some time.

But he had reckoned without his host, as the proverb goes.

Miss Augusta Darby was no ordinary girl; she was a very fine, clever, determined, somewhat wild and somewhat romantic creature; and Mr. Vavasour had formed a very erroneous idea both of her character and of her inclinations.

In fact she was not—as he had fancied from her gay and almost audacious flirtations, and from the sentiments which, under the affectation of an abhorrence of cant, she was too fond of professing—the least in the world really inclined to prefer the idle young men of fashion that frequented the house—still less those of the turf, with whom her father was surrounded—to himself—to a young man of so much intellect and refinement as her cousin.

Ill educated she had been, living in the midst of that dangerous and inferior description of society which a passion for racing draws about a man, and with no guide but a mother, a mere indolent woman of fashion, who left every thing to take its own course; but, in spite of these disadvantages, Augusta Darby had grown up neither heartless nor unprincipled, nor degraded in her tastes.

She had, however, necessarily suffered much from such an education; her feelings were undisciplined, her temper high, her manners rough and independent, and her conversation too often of that daring nature which seems to set all principle at defiance.

She unquestionably was, in spite of all these mental defects, gifted by nature with an excellent understanding; she had much discernment into character; and she had the greatest possible contempt for those gamblers and horse-jockeys, whether gentle or simple, with whom her father chiefly associated. In comparison with these, she regarded Mr. Vavasour with admiration and esteem, and indeed with still tenderer sentiments, which her high spirit forbade her to avow; so that, far from cherishing the indifference for which he had given her credit, she looked upon this half-engagement which their parents had formed between them with very great satisfaction; and considered herself, in spite of her affected indifference, as little less than his wife.

These feelings were not diminished when Mr. Vavasour, very

much improved by the two years which had elapsed since they had last met, appeared before her again.

This dashing, high-spirited, very ignorant, rather masculine, and extremely clever girl, found something particularly captivating in the elegant *nonchalance*, the refined expression of countenance, the indifference in general society, yet the conversation—when he would condescend to talk, so full of feeling, originality, and poetry—which distinguished Vavasour; and she now, in secret, more than ever rejoiced over the engagement which destined her, one day or other, as she conceived, to be his.

It is true he seemed very unaccountably careless and indifferent, and, if he were to be judged by his manner, particularly insensible to her charms; but then he was so indifferent, and careless, and insensible about every thing, that she hoped it was only his way. While he, as you have seen, was equally deceived on his side.

High-spirited, accustomed to the most obsequious adulation from the gentleman who frequented her father's table, having long indulged in that flippant freedom of manner which many girls, brought up as she had been, seem to imagine so charming, she treated Vavasour much as she treated the rest of the world, and thought to captivate him by a sort of freedom of manner, dashed with sarcasms and contradictions, and with an easy, careless, affected sort of indifference which was so successful with others, and which entirely blinded him to the true state of the case. She thought by this style of behavior to awaken in him those feelings of more peculiar interest which she longed to inspire; for she had been brought up in a wretched school, and among a set where a species of vulgar gallantry was substituted for a more rational behavior, and where the gentlemen around her were accustomed to manifest an open devotion to her charms, which she wanted the delicacy to perceive ought to have been any thing but flattering. She had not, to tell the truth, been displeased with this sort of coarse incense—this *musk* in manners—until Vavasour appeared; and then she no longer valued it, and only tolerated it as a means of piquing his feelings or angering his self-love.

He, meanwhile, too much absorbed by the busy world within, to attend much to the world without, looked merely at the surface of things, and was only the more strengthened in his own view of the subject. He thought it impossible but that a handsome, spirited young lady, who was always abusing and quarreling with him, and flirting as hard as she could with others, must secretly hate him; and as his father's illness, of course, for the present, postponed the consideration

of such matters, he contented himself, as we have seen, with letting the matter take its own course, without bringing his mother, as unquestionably he ought to have done, to some explanation.

Lady Missenden, all this while, considered the matter as settled and in progress, and, too much occupied with the unremitting attention her husband's situation required, to attend to other things, made no inquiries, and took no steps about the matter. Mrs. Darby never took steps about any thing, but suffered the world to fleet by her in its own way; and Mr. Darby was far too busy, organizing some English horse-races at Palermo, to trouble himself about what was going on in his family.

“How you can lie there for hours and hours, looking neither at the sky, nor at the ocean, nor at the olive-gardens, nor at the vineyards, nor at the fountains, nor at the streams! I do wonder where that most eccentric spirit of yours can be wandering to, when you creep, like some strange, sly animal, into the remotest possible hole—as if you detested the face of man or woman!—lying there with your eyes half shut, and as if you were insensible to every thing that is going on in this world, except now and then, when you make a great effort, and swear at the flies!”

They were both forming part of a large pic-nic party, which had been arranged upon that beautiful amphitheatre of hills which surrounds and commands a view of the richest and most varied plain in the world. The dinner was spread under a group of magnificent plane-trees, by the side of one of those sparkling crystal fountains, here so abundant, and whose waters, dancing in ten thousand playful waterfalls, rushed toward the sea.

She had been the soul of the company, laughing and talking in her usual somewhat loud, but most entertaining manner; and he had slipped away, had thrown himself, face downward, upon a little green plot covered with beautiful flowers. He was not even, as she supposed, enjoying the scene before him—the towers of the city, resplendent in the sunshine—the transparent waters of the Mediterranean—or the delicious colors of the blended sea and sky, now spread in glorious beauty. No! he had found upon the grass a little purple flower, which had reminded him of one he had once gotten under an English hedgerow, in days gone by, and, with his eyes half closed, but fixed upon the grass before him, he had lost himself in one of those delicious reveries—the food of lovers—and which he, of all lovers in the world, was most calculated to indulge in.

He lifted up his head as she spoke, and looked at her as there she

stood, her splendid figure and fine countenance displayed to great advantage by the dress she wore, and by the hat she had on. He thought within himself—

“I dare say, now, hundreds of men think her very handsome; and so she is: but how completely is all that beauty lost upon me! and how peculiarly loud and disagreeable a voice she has!”

Little did she guess what passed, in the instant, through his mind.

“The flies are very troublesome,” he said. “I can’t think why people must bring one out to be devoured by them. For my part, I would as lief dine with the harpies as have a dinner out of doors amid these infernal insects. But the English have the most stupid ideas of pleasure of any nation in the world!”

“No doubt. I, for one, am not in the least disposed to dispute that proposition; as far, at least, as regards *one* Englishman of my acquaintance,” she answered, sitting down upon a little piece of turf by his side.

You must recollect these two were second cousins, and, having known each other from childhood, she treated him with a familiarity which, with all her ease of manner, she did not quite adopt to others.

“All I marvel at is,” she went on, “that any thing brings you out here to lie in the sun and serve as food for these said flies, with your eyes half shut, and poring upon a bit of grass—things you might just as well do in your own garden—and all the time this delicious scene, this really lovely landscape, is displayed before you. And it puzzles me no less why any man chooses to come into company at all, in order that he may indulge his sulkiness, and lie apart in a nook by himself. But I dare say you think it very fine and clever to play the *desdechado* in this manner. Some people are so fond of making themselves ridiculous, all the time thinking themselves very grand—by striving to be as unlike other people, and as bearish and unsociable as they can!”

“Striving!” said he; “why, my mother bade me come, didn’t she? And you know how I hate all that flirting, and gossiping, and gormandizing, and champagne-drinking, which is going on. I think it’s very hard, when every body pleases themselves, that I may not do the same, and creep into a corner, and enjoy my own thoughts. I trouble nobody, and wish to trouble nobody; I wish they would do the same by me!”

“That’s a hint for me to go away, I suppose?”

“Take it as you like; but, indeed,” said he, rousing himself, and rather shocked at his own rudeness, “I do not mean it so.”

“Then make me some amends,” said she. “Rouse up, sir, and

let us hear the sound of your voice ; and, if you would condescend so far, let us enjoy this delicious, this exquisite, this enchanting scene together."

"It is very beautiful!" he said. "I don't know why I care so little for it. I feel that I like England better—the sweet fields, and hedges, and woods of dear, rural England!"

"You monster!"

"Yes," said he, "I am a monster, no doubt, quite unlike every body else in the wide world ; and you think so, Augusta ! I must appear detestable to you ; for it is impossible to conceive of two beings so utterly incapable of understanding each other's thoughts as you and I are. It is impossible to conceive of two people more different."

"Luckily—I wouldn't be such a sentimental bear as you are for worlds!"

"That's just what I am—the most uncivilized brute in the world, I know. But it's too late to mend ; and the worst is, I don't care to mend : for life is a cheat, and there is nothing in it."

She looked vexed, an expression of pain came over her face, but she persisted in her bantering manner :—

"Nothing in it because there is nothing in you, I must conclude ; for, as for me, I find plenty in it. I have no patience with you, Vavasour, to lie in such a spot upon such a day, and with—with . . . and say life has nothing in it!"

"I am weary of my existence," he cried, impatiently ; and, rising from the ground, he walked away from her, and she saw him sit down at a considerable distance, with his face turned toward the sea.

"How whimsical, and unkind, and rude he is!" she thought. "But it is plain how it is—he thinks himself so secure of me, that he is beginning to give me a specimen of the negligent husband already ; but I must try to teach him that things are not altogether come to that point yet—I must try to make him a little less confident."

And so she did try to pique him by the display of her indifference to him, and contrast it with the favor she showed to others ; but the more she tried to vex him, the better pleased he certainly seemed to be. Her rude speeches and capricious avoidance of him were sure to put him into good humor : he never was so much himself, so inclined to be agreeable, his conversation was never so captivating, or his manner so interesting, as when poor Augusta was making a perfect martyr of herself with her endeavors to tease and disoblige him.

Nobody observed what was going on, or that the poor girl was getting more and more in love with this cruel indifferent. Every day his intellectual cultivation, his gentle and polished manners, his high principles, his delicate sense of honor, and refined taste, only approved themselves more and more to her, in contrast with the very inferior society with which she usually associated.

But, as her passion increased, most unfortunately her defects seemed to increase with it: she did not become subdued and gentle; she was neither softened nor improved by its influence; her pride took alarm, her temper often failed her.

She became more sarcastic and contemptuous in her manner, as he, absorbed, as it would seem, in his own reflections, became more distant and concentrated in himself.

And thus things went on between them, while Lord Missenden kept hesitating upon the confines of life or death; Lady Missenden was absorbed in her attentions to his comfort, or the regulation of his affairs; Mrs. Darby reclined on a sofa, complaining of the heat; and Mr. Darby looked after his English horse-races.

It was necessary to introduce these people to you, which being done, we will for the present bid them adieu, and, by your leave, return to England.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Account him thy real friend that desires thy good rather than thy *good will*.

FULLER.

It is now the early spring time, and people are beginning to come into London.

The family of the Usherwoods is in Lowndes Square, and all the bustle of the London season will soon begin.

There are parties already to be attended every night; the ladies' maids are beginning to work at alterations of dresses, without remission. The elder young ladies have commenced that unbroken round of dissipation which renders them more irritable in their tempers, and more insatiable in their demands upon the spirits and time of others, than ever.

Mrs. Usherwood, engaged in the fatiguing business of chaperoning her daughters every night, and sleeping off the fatigues of the even-

ing by lying in bed till twelve o'clock each morning, has no time or thoughts to devote to other things.

Angela, shut up in her hot schoolroom, labors away, her days unbroken by any refreshing change. Even those visits to her little charges, which she had hoped to make so frequent, are nearly altogether put a stop to.

Young and beautiful as she is, she can not walk the streets alone; and, weak and delicate as she is becoming, the fatigue of even a walk of that length is too much for her, and incapacitates her during the whole day for her tasks.

It is many weeks since she has found it possible to visit them; but at length the month of April arrives, and with it comes Miss Grant up from Widdrington to cheer with her kindness, and assist with her abundant means, the sick and the sorrowful, the prisoner and the stranger.

She was not long before she found time to visit our poor prisoner in her schoolroom, and she was shocked to see how thin and delicate she was looking.

After a little conversation, she discovered how impossible Angela had found it to enjoy the least liberty of action, and how anxiously she desired to see her children, whom she had not visited for so long a time.

To learn this, and to propose to take her to — street immediately in her carriage, then standing at the door, was as one thing.

Angela made no hesitation in accepting the offer, and immediately prepared herself to set out upon an excursion which made her better acquainted with her companion in one morning than all the short interviews at Wimbledon had enabled her to be.

The carriage had to pass through that wretched and seemingly interminable labyrinth of streets which are to be found in various quarters of this huge city, and in none more so than in that quarter of the town they had to pass through. Streets where the physical light is obscured, but where, alas! the moral light is more completely darkened; where every object speaks of degradation and vice, and of misery, the offspring of degradation and vice—where the face of man, formed to reflect the divine image, seems degenerating into the brute; and worse, from the brute into the demon—darkened by crime, groveling in indolence and dirt; sunk in low, sensual, animal pleasures; shut out, as it were, from all that is genial and pure, and delighting in corruption and wickedness.

The conversation had for some time ceased, for Miss Grant, sitting a little forward, her eyes fixed upon the side-window of her carriage, was silent. She seemed engaged in watching intently

these scenes of wretchedness as they glided by. Angela could not help being struck with the deeply mournful expression of her face, the almost darkened solemnity which spread over her features, as the carriage proceeded through these streets, too often traversed—when traversed by the happier of mankind they are—with a thoughtless, careless insensibility.

By Angela herself, even, when she had passed through them, they had been regarded rather with terror and disgust than with any other feeling. She had looked at these things through the imagination alone; and it was not till she observed Joan's countenance that she understood what it was to regard them through the *heart*, and as a source of the deepest and most heartfelt pity.

These streets, however, so narrow, with their low, miserable houses, windows darkened with mud and dust, paper-patched, rag-stuffed panes, and their profusion of squalid, ragged, reckless, and degraded inhabitants, terminated at length in one of somewhat better appearance; but as a brighter light penetrated it, as the pleasant blue sky might be seen over head, as the fresher and purer air blew into the carriage, and every thing to her began to assume a pleasanter aspect, she observed an expression of acute pain pass over Joan's face.

She looked round to discover what had occasioned it.

The first object which presented itself in this row of larger and better houses, where life seemed to be relieved from some of its oppression, and to assume a better and happier aspect, was a magnificent gin-shop.

There it stood, in all its captivating splendor—true image of Sin.

Sin—which the great moral poet has painted, with face of beauty to entice, and form of yelling hell-hounds to devour!

Sin—clothed in the royalties of gold and purple!

Sin—whose outside is enticing as the apple of Sodom, and within all ashes and bitterness!

There was a string of carts which, just at this juncture, impeded the way, and the carriage was obliged to stop just in front of this gorgeous receptacle of death and crime.

There it stood, amid the plain, dark brick dwellings that surrounded it, resplendent in the sunshine, with its gilded and blue pillars, its large, bright windows, its tempting painted barrels and vases fraught with deadly poison for body and soul alike, all glittering in the morning light, clear, airy, pleasant, and fresh—displaying its temptations in the most seducing forms, and contrasting by its gay appearance, its apparent order, wealth, and comfort, with the dull and sordid air of every thing around it.

But who are those creeping in and out?—what wretched, pallid, dingy, shaking forms are those?—whose are those shriveled features, those blood-shot eyes, those trembling limbs?—whose that air of depravity and misery?—Men, women, children—all—all! Are these the frequenters of this pleasant, lightsome place?

And, behold! within there are men of regular lives—we can not call them *good* men—and young, respectable women—church-goers—chapel-goers—creatures from the innocent country abodes, daughters of respectable farmers and shop-keepers; there they are, standing attentive to business, serving out the liquid fire—the hell-fire—to their wretched and deluded fellow-creatures!

As the carriage halted, the dark, expressive eyes of Joan, with a sort of deprecating horror, were traveling over the front of this handsome building. And she shuddered as she gazed at this habitation of woe.

Ah lascia ogni speranza voi ch' entrate!

But now the carriage moved slowly forward, and, with a deep sigh, she turned her head away.

“What is that place,” said Angela, “which looks so bright and gay in the midst of the general ugliness of this street? and what miserable looking people are going in and out of it! In comparison with every thing around it, it looks quite a palace!”

“Don't you know?—yes; it is called a gin palace!”

“A *gin* palace! What a name!”

“That's the name which people in their carelessness—fools who make a mock at sin, I am almost tempted to say—give it, in their idle, joking way.”

“You seemed to look at it with horror.”

“My dear Angela, if this fair covering of the earth's bosom were to be removed, and we were able to see the boiling, surging sea of fire upon which wise men say we are resting, do you think the very hair of our heads would not rise with horror? Something like this I feel at the contemplation of these sights. No,” she said, as if speaking to herself, “I never *can* get accustomed to them. Nay, God forbid I ever should.”

“I can bear to think of the sorrow, and the privation, and the sufferings of the unfortunates of this world,” she went on; “for is not God with the mourner, to wipe all tears from all faces? but this! this utter, this unutterable darkness—this absence from His holy presence—these wretched, lost, miserable, unaneled sinners! Oh . . .!”

And covering her face with her hands, she uttered a stifled groan, like one endeavoring to suppress the expression of intense pain.

Angela slightly trembled, and looked extremely grave.

She had been ever generous, kind, and compassionate; but the state of so many of her fellow-creatures, perishing in vice and misery, had never been called to her attention in this way before.

She felt almost bewildered with the new thoughts which now crowded rapidly upon her mind, and ashamed and humbled at remarking how little she had till now thought upon the subject.

"They take pains to make them happier; but who will make them *good*?" said Joan, as she sank backward in the carriage, in a tone of despondency. "How shall we make them *good*? O Thou, the Lord and Master of these poor misguided creatures," she murmured to herself, "shine upon them with thy holy light! Carry thy purifying Spirit into these dark abodes of sin and death, and call forth a new creation!" Then turning to Angela, and relapsing into the tone of more ordinary conversation, yet with her large, dark eyes, not tearful, but still full of a feeling too big for tears, she said, almost as if talking to herself,—

"This subject is so perplexed with contradictions! Great efforts are undoubtedly being made by a righteous government, and greater still by the almost innumerable saints and worthies of this dear, dear England, in the cause. How many are daily striving, and have striven, to arrest this tide of evil, and yet how little has yet been done, or rather how much, how very much, remains undone! Nay, in some respects, things, I fear, are worse than they have been; and if much light has been diffused, many lights have gone out.

"It seems to me (the impression is strong with me), that in some things wrong principles have been adopted. They talk to these poor creatures of liberty, who are perishing for want of discipline—and enlarge upon the neglect of duties in those above them, till they teach them to forget they have duties of their own to perform. Is it not the summit of human virtue—the most difficult trial to which human virtue can be exposed, to resist temptation and act well, when released from the pressure of those external circumstances which, as it were, *force* so many men to be prudent and orderly in spite of themselves? and can it be right to expose these poor ignorant creatures to that most trying of temptations, by allowing them, nay, almost inviting them, to cast the burden of their own responsibility upon others, by this unvarying habit in writers with the best intentions of attributing their sins to any cause rather than their own weakness and folly; and when vice, and sloth, and intemperance, have ex-

hausted their resources, inciting them to claim as a *right* from their fellows the means of subsistence they have so inexcusably flung away? Alas! of such false teaching what can come? But what, in fact, does come?—Self-delusion, temptation irresistible; while all the excitements to wholesome toil, self-government, self-denial, which are the life of the soul, are done away.

“Poverty is no crime. Have we not rather reason to thank God in this our day, and say, extreme poverty is almost always the result of crime? The time has been when the crime *was* that of others—in this our day it is their own.”

“That sounds almost harsh to me,” said Angela, “who have known so much poverty, and experienced its sufferings, and seen those I loved suffering from it too, and still see them. My poor little brothers and sister! Poverty seems to me indeed no crime, but deeply, deeply to be pitied. What would have become of us if nobody had pitied us?”

And she looked up at Miss Grant's face, grateful, yet in doubt.

“I am speaking of classes, not of individuals, my dear. God knows there are poor, shipwrecked mariners enough upon this stormy sea, who are the true objects of Christian love and pity. So are they all, indeed, the masses, objects of love and pity; but Christian charity *can* not, and therefore *ought* not, to attempt to maintain them all—to maintain a whole class. Each man must and ought to sustain himself; and by the everlasting *law*, he can have no *right* to demand sustenance from another. The law of charity, the law of love, was made to heal the sufferings which arise from the workings of the irrevocable moral, as well as natural laws; but when the law of love becomes an institution like that of justice, instead of the freewill offering of the heart, it loses its nature, and indeed,” said she with a smile, “I could almost bring myself to say, partakes of the nature of sin.”

“I am losing myself in the subject, dear Angela, which will not interest you, but which, I confess, interests me deeply. Not in order to secure the possessions of the rich, believe me, but to preserve the morality of the poor, are those laws of property, those stern laws of justice, so sacred in my eyes. When once this foundation-stone of right, of individual right to what is a man's own, of plain unflinching justice between man and man, is shaken, the whole edifice of society trembles; and therefore I think it false as it is wrong, and wrong as it is false, to talk, as some authoritatively do, of the *right* of the poor to be maintained.”

“But where some are so very rich, and others so very poor, does

it not seem right that the rich should be *made* to contribute to the poor, if they are too hard-hearted to do it themselves?"

"I don't know—I doubt it very much," was, to the astonishment of Angela, Joan's reply.

She opened her eyes wide with surprise.

She, so good, so generous, so kind, doubt of what seemed such a plain notion of natural justice to her!

"It is not for the sake of property, but for the sake of right," said Joan, as if speaking to herself, "that I am so anxious to maintain this principle." Then turning to Angela, "What is that you propose to do?" said she. "Is it not merely taking what is one man's, because another man happens to want it?"

"But the man you take it from does not want it," said Angela. "I am thinking of superfluous wealth."

"Who shall measure the superfluous? My dear," she said gravely, "time was when I thought as you do; but my views have altered. I think I see now, that the law which preserves his thousands of acres to the rich man is the same which secures his little garden and his crust of bread to the poor. But in these things there can be no degrees, for the rule must be made absolute, or it is no rule at all. Where shall we begin, or where shall we stop? The limits of every man's acquisition must be his powers of acquisition, be they personal or accidental. All the law can do, or ought to do, is to prevent unjust acquisition. And what do we mean by *unjust* acquisition? It is not to be measured by its extent, but by its principle. Unjust acquisition is to take what is not your own; and who does that more than one of these poor gin-drinkers, who has sold his morsel of bread to buy his own destruction, and then thinks another ought to be *forced* to replace it?"

"Then you would have no poor-laws? Good heavens! what would become of the poor?"

"Not exactly that—the rich, who make the poor-laws, have the right to tax themselves to provide for the poor; but this constitutes no claim, no indefeasible claim, upon the part of the poor. It is given them as an act of common charity, not as the discharge of rigid justice."*

She seemed as if she were about to say more upon this subject, which, indeed, very much occupied her thoughts, but she stopped,

* Justice founds its claims on rights, charity on wants. The individual should be charitable, the community should be *just*; and this principle, I believe, can never be forgotten without the greatest real injustice.

for the carriage had arrived at its destination, and stood before the door of Mrs. Levet.

"You will think my opinions very harsh and hard-hearted, I fear," said Joan, before the man opened the door. "I do not well know why I talked of them to you. They require much explanation to be properly understood, and therefore I seldom enter into conversations of this nature. And you, my dear Angela, at present have quite enough to do with matters nearer home. Only promise not to think me dreadfully hard-hearted."

"I am not very likely to do that," said Angela, looking up gratefully in her face.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Yet I've one plank, and that shall ~~never~~ leave me.

THE children sprang, with a shout of rapture, to her arms.

"Angy, Angy! Come again, dear Angy!" covering her cheeks, her gown, her hands, with kisses; the little boy standing looking at her—the little girl hiding her face, and the tears of joy that rolled down her cheeks against her dress. "Angy! dear, dear, pretty Angy!"

But baby turned away his head.

"Baby not know its Angy! And, dear Nurse! you look pale and ill, Nurse. And my little ones! Lucy, my darling, how pale you look! Little Tommy, what have you done with your red cheeks? Baby, baby! angel baby! He looks not well, Nurse!" Joan stood unobserved by the window, watching this scene.

This young girl of nineteen—this little mother with her children crowding round her, looking first at one, then at the other, with such tender motherly affection and care!

But Joan's countenance was not full of grief and pity at this spectacle, as at that of the gin-palace. No, here was poverty, here was privation, but here was not sin; and her eyes, as she looked on them, were beaming with joy.

She did so adore what was noble, right, and true; the beautiful in morals, that was the passion of her heart.

Angela kept looking at her children anxiously.

"But, dear Nurse, they don't look well—they don't, indeed!"

"Nor you either, for that matter, Miss Angela," said Nurse. "Be quiet, children! how you do pull her about! Madam," turning to Miss Grant, "I beg your pardon—will you not be pleased to take a chair?"

"Thank you, I am very well where I am. Miss Nevil, they are lovely little things; but you will like to stay with them a little, perhaps; and as I have one or two more things to do, I will call for you again in an half an hour. Oh! pray don't trouble yourself, Mrs. Nurse, I shall find my way down stairs very well."

She had been at most but five minutes in the room, but her quick discerning eye saw at once how it all was.

"Indeed, Nurse, you, none of you look well."

"How should we, my dear Miss Angela? Only think of it—this street is so close, and there comes up such a smell from it in rainy weather. And then that court behind; it is full of such rough drunken people, that I never can open *those* windows. The children would see such sights and hear such things. I'm forced to keep the shutters shut most part of the day, for Master Tommy there grows a big boy; and to see boys of his age gambling and fighting, and hear them blaspheming and swearing, can not be good for him in no way."

"Poor children! What do you do all day long when you can't walk out?"

"Oh, we never hardly walk out," said Tommy. "Nurse says we shall dirty and spoil our things this bad weather."

"Oh, Nurse, that's not like you! you used to say air was as necessary as daily bread for young children. Not take them out for fear they should dirty and spoil their clothes!"

"Why, Miss Angela, how like your old self you *do* talk! Do you think I'd have them get as dirty and shabby as all the little vagabonds in the street? Not I. Those who do not respect themselves, soon learn not to be respectable. I would fain keep my poor master's children a little tidy, Miss Angela; and what's to be done in dirty weather? Their clothes will soon be worn out any how. At home I keep 'em in their brown-holland pinafores, and it saves shoes too; and bless you, my dear angel, where are we to get more when they are gone? The guinea a-week—poor little dears! why it all goes in food—those children want so much."

"My poor little ones!" was all she could say, pressing them both to her heart. "But here, Nurse, here is the interest I have just received from the stocks—seven pounds ten. I shall not want it."

Stay, I must have a little—here are six pounds. Now put that by to get them shoes when they want them, and a new jacket and trousers for my tom-boy, and a frock for Lucy, when the things they have are worn out. But, for heaven's sake, let them go out every day, good Nurse."

"And what are you to do yourself for clothes, I wonder? for your gown and bonnet are getting very shabby. The bread earner must be served first, Miss Nevil; it will never do for *you* to want clothes, I'm sure of that. Better these poor little lambs should want fresh air."

"I shall make these do; but let me look at their things."

The inspection was disheartening; their clothes were beginning, indeed, to wear out—shoes above all. It was evident that Nurse's fears were but too well founded, rags and tatters were at hand.

It is easy in these cases to manage for a little girl, but what is to be done for a boy? The tailor must be called in.

"I do take 'em out when I can, on a Sunday when it's fine," said Nurse; "and we get into that pretty park of St. James's—oh, what a blessing is that park! to see the children feeding the ducks and swans. Pretty lambs, they always save a bit of their breakfast for that. But it's a long way to go, and so difficult to get through the streets, which are so thronged of a Sunday. I often wonder where in the world the people come from. But Mrs. Levet is good-natured in going with us; I must say that for Sarah, she has been extremely kind to us while you have been away."

"She's not at home just now; I only saw the boy as I came up. I want to thank her."

"No, she has gone down to the post-office to see if there's a letter. Poor thing! it seems as if she could not wait till the postman comes round. And it's such a walk, too! And her letter, if there is one, it won't be given her. But she's so anxious for a letter, and thinks all sorts of foolish nonsenses when one doesn't come—that there's one's lying at the dead-letter office, wanting a direction, or so on. Well, matrimony is a strange thing! To think of Sarah ever caring so much for that wild fellow of a head groom of Mr. Darby's!"

Angela's heart too now began again to make itself a voice; she managed in general to keep it tolerably silent, but now it was throbbing and fluttering and asking questions.

"Has Mrs. Levet heard while I have been away?"

"I think she has, ma'am. But here she comes, I hear her voice down below."

And Mrs. Levet was heard ascending the little narrow staircase; and she soon made her appearance after knocking, for she had heard below that Angela was arrived.

"May I come in, Miss Nevil?"

"Oh, Mrs. Levet I wanted to see you so much, to thank you for all your kindness to these dear children. And how are you?—and how is your husband? and have you heard from him again?"

"Once," said Mrs. Levet, "and he said he thought his master was coming home. There's talk, it seems, of his marrying a young lady out there: but Tom's close and would not mention her name. Lady Missenden is quite anxious, it seems, about it; but, as far as I can hear, the young master sulks, and is quite out of spirits. And the last news was that he was coming to England; but his mother, Lady Missenden, won't hear of it, Tom says. I wish I'd got the letter to show you, but I lent it to a friend to read, for it's very interesting—all about those Catholic idolatries, and a great idol they've got there of Saint Rosolin. Tom seems quite charmed with these things, which I am very sorry for; I hope in heaven he won't turn Catholic. I'd ten thousand times rather he was as he is now, which is almost nothing."

"Nay," said Angela, smiling; don't say so, Mrs. Levet."

But she said no more.

Never was fate so strange as hers, she thought; this total silence—this strange darkness and obscurity. Why, if he were living, did he not write? and why, if he were dead, had she this unaccountable persuasion that he did live, and that he was Tom Levet's master?

"Did you remember, when you wrote, to ask what his master's name was?" said Angela.

"Yes, Miss; it's *Varasour*; at last I have got it."

Angela uttered a faint shriek, and clasped her hands in a sort of spasm.

"What's the matter, Miss Angela?" cried Nurse, running to her, alarmed at the deathlike paleness of her countenance.

"Why, dear me!" said the old woman, "you were not thinking of Mr. Carteret all this time, when you were so anxious about Tom Levet's master? Why, his master is the son of a lord, and Mr. Carteret was nothing but a poor vagabond drawing-master. Why, if he was a gentleman, didn't he come again, after poor misses had asked about him?"

"Oh, he is then dead!" said Angela, covering her face with her hands.

"I don't believe that one bit neither, Miss," said Nurse; "though I made believe I did, to quiet you at the time: but who ever died in such a sudden way, and no inquiry made about him? The people he lodged with would have tracked him, I make no doubt of it; and, besides, he must have left letters or something. He had parents, you know—my misses told me that—and they were abroad; "but they'd have routed him out someway. Never think about him more, Miss Angela. I always misdoubted him from the first, but misses and you wouldn't hear of it. He's taken himself away, seeing he was about to be found out. He was a swindler and a pretender, though you couldn't see it. I've heard hundreds of such tales before now."

She still kept her hands over her eyes, shutting out the light, and endeavoring to extract something like expectation from the strange mixture of feelings which this speech excited. That Nurse had never really believed him to be dead, now struck her as a strange confirmation of the feelings which had lately been gaining strength in her mind; but then he was equally lost to her. Why did he not give the least account of himself? The idea of his being a swindler and a pretender, as Nurse called him, was utterly irreconcilable with all she had seen of him. Yet what strange mystery hung around him!

"Surely never was poor heart so distracted as mine!" thought she.

Then the thought struck her, that there might be letters from him lying at the farm; that Mrs. Whitwell might have heard something from him, or of him; or that letters might have been sent to her there, and never forwarded; and she determined to write that very night and inquire.

To do something in such cases is such a relief.

Yet, in spite of this relief, her countenance betrayed so much agitation when Miss Grant returned, that she could not help observing it.

She came up with a basket in each hand; one filled with nice things for the children to eat, the other with toys.

"My dear," she said, "our time is out, and I must hurry you away, I am afraid. But see, my little loves, I have brought you some pretty things for your sister to give you; and you'll be very good till she comes back, won't you? She shall soon come again, if you will let her go now."

But they hung about her, and would not part with her.

The sight of the toys could not console them for losing their Angy.

With much difficulty the parting at last was made, and they were once more in the carriage.

Then Joan took hold of Angela's hand, and said, very kindly—

"Something amiss has happened. Have you heard any bad news? You look so much hurried. May I ask you, or must I not ask you?"

But Angela turned away her head a little, and colored.

"It is not that I am ashamed," said Angela, in a low voice, "but I can not help coloring. No, I have no wish to keep any thing from you, for you are kindness itself; but, perhaps it is impossible to make another conceive It seems so strange to myself that such strong feelings almost a stranger—yet, oh, how unlike a stranger!"

Joan only pressed her hand, and said nothing.

"It must seem so foolish, so weak, so unaccountable to you."

"Why to me?" said Joan, with a sigh, which she endeavored to check. "Why must it seem so foolish and so unaccountable to *me*?"

"I don't know," said Angela, playing with the window-tassel of the carriage, and looking away: "but you seem too sensible—your reason must have had too much strength, ever to be so foolish as I am."

Joan sighed again.

"Poor Angela! is that it?" she said.

"It is the strange, mysterious uncertainty," Angela went on. "I think I could bear it if I could know the truth—could forget him if unworthy; and mourn over him with a certain sweetness, even if he were dead: for, oh, he was so truly noble and good! I think there never was any one so unhappy as I am," she added, her voice faltering, and the tears beginning to roll down her cheek.

"Do you think so, dear Angela? and yet you seem to have no doubt that he loved you."

"Oh!" said she, lifting up her eyes, and turning them full upon her friend, filled with enthusiastic faith and confidence, "I never have, and I never, never will doubt that!"

"Then do not say that never was unhappiness equal to yours," said Joan, in a low voice, and a deep color mounted slowly into her cheek.

"Have *you* been unhappy, too?" said Angela; and she felt as if she loved her a thousand times more than she had ever done before for the weakness. So true it is—

"One touch of nature makes all mankind kin."

"Yes," said Joan, "I was once. And," added she, with extreme gentleness, "I am very sorry for you."

"But tell me all about it, Angela," as, recovering herself, she went on—"I think you will be better for talking of it; for yours is a sorrow of which you *can* speak."

And Joan recollected with a sort of terror those yearnings for confidence, that longing for sympathy, and that deep, ineffaceable sense of shame, which had made her dread even the kind eye of her grandmother. All the intense sufferings of so many years ago, burnt in, as it were, in characters indelible upon her heart, seemed for the moment revived, as if but of yesterday.

"If he loved you, you can not be very, very unhappy, Angela."

Then Angela, blushing, and stammering, and hesitating, related her little history—the brief but most sweet romance of her life, and its sudden and awful termination.

"But he is not dead now, I feel sure he is not dead," she ended by saying. "I once thought he must be. I do not know why I have changed my opinion. Do you believe in presentiments, Miss Grant? I can not help it. I think he will come again."

"God grant it!" was all Joan could reply.

She was not sanguine. Her life had been darkened by one deep disappointment. She had learned to expect little from it.

After a severe struggle with herself, when time, that benign and sure physician to the heart's severest wounds, had aided her unremitting efforts to escape despondency and melancholy, she had reviewed her position calmly and wisely; and, a bankrupt in happiness herself, had turned her whole attention, and directed the strong powers of her mind, to the divine mission of universal charity—to the promotion of the good of others.

Many live this life, it is to be hoped, and more or less find happiness in it; but how wide is the difference between the fate of her who lives surrounded by the objects of tender affection, and finds her devotion repaid by all the joys of the heart, and one left to this solitude of the affections! Yet in that strenuous endeavor after the promotion of good, that earnest desire to dispense the talents intrusted to her well, Joan had found serenity and peace. Still there were moments, and this had been one, when the wounds of the heart would bleed afresh; and strange to say, that lot which in patient resignation she had accepted for herself, she felt as if she could not bear the thought of presenting as a compensation to her friend.

That young creature, so animated, so alive to every warm and affectionate feeling, so full of hope, and, in spite of all her misfor-

tunes, to whom life was still so dear—she could not bear to cast over her prospects the sober shade of her own experience ; to repeat to one so young and sanguine the stern lesson she had learned herself.

She could not bear to say to one just opening into life, “ This world is nothing ; and in a better we must look for the restitution of all things.”

She yearned to see her happy *here*, as well.

Many a religious person would have thought this a want of faith upon her part, but she had shown in the victory over her own disappointment the force of a faith triumphant ; and, for my part, I love her better for this human weakness—if weakness it were—for not enduring to witness in the case of another those struggles and sufferings which had been so nobly vanquished in her own.

CHAPTER XXX.

After all, we are to remember that an incidental alms deserves not much commendation ; it is a regular habit of doing good which shows a true sense of benevolence.

STILLINGFLEET.

“ I AM glad you can hope, dear Angela,” Joan had said. “ Encourage Hope while you can—Hope is so sweet ! Strange things do happen in this world of ours ; we fancy they will never happen to ourselves, but they *do*. I agree with Nurse—the death of any individual, however friendless, never occurs without some stir being made about it. You were two months at the Great Ash Farm after his disappearance. You must have heard something. This young man, by your account, was evidently one that must have been loved and valued, and gently educated ; there was a mother and father ; he would have been traced, depend upon it.”

They had returned home by New Norfolk-street, where Miss Grant's town-house was situated ; she had business there. They were now sitting in the pleasant bay-window that looked over the Park.

The Park was, however, now but the dull, uninteresting scene which it is early in March ; but the air was soft and pleasant, and the window was open.

“ You are quite wise to write to Mrs. Whitwell, as you propose ;

who knows, but there may be letters? And then, my dear," continued Joan, with extreme kindness, "the declaration of his affection, the ring in pledge which you wear upon your finger, entitles your friends to exert themselves, without indelicacy to you. Much may be done, if we can but trace him; and we will spare no pains to do that."

Oh, if people knew—oh, if they only would accustom themselves to consider, the very great blessing of kindness—of that kindness which really sympathizes with what is, instead of striving to alter feelings to what they would wish them to be, many of us would be so much kinder than we are.

Joan would have been but too glad could she have obliterated from Angela's mind those traces of the past which interfered with her peace; she would have been so glad to have thought her at peace; but how vain was the wish! While there was any uncertainty left, the remembrance must be kept up. The only thing to be done was to help her, if possible, to obtain satisfaction.

The joy that kindled Angela's cheek and shone in her eyes at these last words, gave Joan but a melancholy pleasure.

She was glad to see her look happy; yet so fearful of being only the harbinger of disappointment.

"Ah, my dear, but you must be prepared for disappointment," said she tenderly.

Angela took her hand, and kissed it with a sort of pious reverence.

"I have ever believed that the issues of things are right," she said; "if I had not, what would have become of me?"

It was settled that she should write without the delay of a day, and she sat down to the writing-table for that purpose. During this time Miss Grant, in her own quiet manner, was employed in opening the various letters and papers with which the table was covered. She was looking them over, arranging and noting them, like one accustomed to transact serious business; not the light engagements of a woman's life, but business with men and with the world.

When Angela had finished her letter, she sat observing her, and looking round upon the room, which was a sort of type of the mind and habits of her to whom it belonged.

This room, which was not the drawing-room—it being in the floor above—was Miss Grant's own private morning apartment; the room in which the greatest portion of her life, while living in London, was spent; and the arrangements which pervaded it showed

the spirit of industrious and useful occupation which actuated its possessor.

Her very large fortune had constituted her something of a public character; and with the energy and powerful sense of the claims and responsibilities of her position, she—as I have been told is the case with the loftiest lady in the kingdom—labored, as very few of her inferiors chose to labor, most strenuously and conscientiously in the discharge of them.

Time was with her the invaluable talent, of which she demanded of herself the strictest account, as the only means by which she could possibly be enabled to dispense her other high faculties as she ought to do.

And it was this value attached to *time* which constituted, in the dearth of her affections, her real happiness.

There was no *time* to dwell upon the waste within her breast.

The room was plainly furnished; indeed, the severe simplicity of Joan's taste might be discerned, not only in this, but in every thing around her. Carriage, dress, apartments, entertainments—it was all the same; grave, handsome, but plain. No tinsel, no display; and, above all, no wanton extravagance or luxury. There was a good deal of the grandfather in her, as I have observed. She disliked luxury; nay, I believe she thought the indulgence of a taste for luxury wrong.

She disliked extravagance, too, and decidedly thought *that* wrong.

Her establishment was conducted upon the principles which governed her personal habits. A firm and almost severe system; neither idleness, nor waste, nor luxurious indulgences would she allow. Plenty of plain and wholesome food, but not one article of mere luxurious indulgence—no idle imitation of the wasteful systems of others, would she permit.

But while her sway was firm and decided, never was heart more really alive to the true interests of all who depended upon her. All the servants knew that they had a true friend in their mistress; if her resolution and spirit rendered all unworthy gains and speculations impossible, care was taken to teach and encourage them to the best economy and management of what was righteously their own.

Her servants grew rich without the practice of any one of those mean devices which degrade the class in their own eyes and in those of others.

They all loved her for her kindness, and honored her for her firmness; and wrong was not attempted, where it was well known it

would not for one instant be tolerated. This household was a school of discipline in virtue, and the abode of peace and happiness.

The Englishman (and woman) of the lower classes do not require what is commonly called pleasure; and the attempt to do away with our old Puritan prejudices upon this head, and to awaken the appetite for pleasure by facilitating the means of its enjoyment, which with the best intentions have been attempted, I believe, have in general failed.

Those acquainted in a way my experience has not enabled me to be with what goes on in those singing saloons, or music saloons,—“Devil’s Seminaries,” (as an old Sabbath-school teacher designated them)—which are multiplying in all our large manufacturing towns; those free-and-easy clubs—those parties at taverns—those balls and concerts—fancy balls and masquerades, which at such public-houses are established, and a taste for which seems increasing, will, perhaps, coincide with me in the opinion, that a taste for *pleasure* can not be safely indulged among our people.

It may, perhaps, be gratified abroad, without injury to the morals of the people—of that I can not speak; and, certainly, those who have seen the gayly-dressed peasantry of France, young and old, crowding to their little rural fêtes, would be sorry to think evil could lurk under so cheerful and pleasant a disguise.

But how different, in fact, are those things arising from the long-established habits of the people, and carried on in the open air, from the hot-beds of vice which such assemblies prove in our crowded, suffocating cities!

Such excitements are neither wholesome nor necessary. Air and pleasant scenery, social walks of families together—cakes and fruit bought as they go; that grave and temperate enjoyment which rejoices the heart of every well-wisher of his kind who walks our Parks of a Sunday; this is what is best suited to a serious, industrious, and moral people, such as we were constituted to be; and our Puritan ancestors, when they placed the more exciting pleasures under the ban, had a juster insight, I think, into what forms the real happiness of the working classes, than the benevolent romancers of our present day.

Give the people parks; let every great city have its lungs; let the blue arch of heaven bend over, and the eye of God watch the enjoyments of His people; but let us discourage junketing, feasting, drinking, and making love in *rooms*. Whenever many are gathered together in a room, the air is not more corrupted than the spirit will be.

She had derived it from those who had gone before her—from the stern simplicity of her grandfather, from the grave purity of her grandmother, from the benevolent severity of her minister—this love, this passion for order, for well-directed discipline, for purity, for *good*.

To make them all *good*.

She had been taught to strive for *good*, rather than for happiness, in the faith that the truest *good* is the best happiness.

She strove to carry out this with every one with whom she had to do, to seek their happiness *through* their *good*; and the result, as far as her own household was concerned, was eminently successful.

Those papers which she is looking over with so much interest, what are they?

Temperance papers, and the reports upon the police of jails, and upon the ragged schools, and of the proceedings of those blessed spirits—angels of light, whatsoever their poor outward seeming may be—who visit the abodes of wretchedness and vice to rescue the fallen and to save the lost.

Had her fortune been three times as large, she would have had more than enough to do with it.

To rescue the fallen, and to save the lost, and to stem the torrent of wickedness.

And how?

By pandering to the passions of the misguided ones, in the name of a benevolent regard for their welfare; as he, *l'ami du peuple*, the arch-fiend Marat, did in his day?—(let our own newspapers beware!) by flattering their self-love, blinding them to their own heavy faults and moral wants, their sad shortcomings, their ignorance, and their weakness, their profligacy, and their vanity?

No.

But by a frank, true, wholesome, faithful representation of those truths upon which all society rests.

Such as, that every man in his condition must play his part, and play it well; and that it is not in the power of any society to shelter men from the consequences of their own mistakes.

That England expects *every* man to do his duty.

That God is no respecter of persons, but in every condition he that doeth righteousness is accepted of Him.

To teach them that the best happiness and true prosperity of every one would be found in obedience to the plain, wholesome, almost forgotten doctrine of our inimitable Church Catechism:

“Not to covet nor desire other men's goods; but to learn and labor truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call me.”

I believe every person who has made it his business to visit and make himself acquainted with the actual state of the poor, will not be surprised to hear that Miss Grant—however unfashionable, old-maid-like, and queer it may make her seem to some of you—was a most strenuous supporter of the Temperance cause. She likewise more particularly interested herself, personally and individually, in the fate of all young women who were dependant upon their own labor for bread.

This very numerous class, whether as governesses, improvers, milliners's apprentices, shop-girls, or seamstresses; whether sitting behind stalls selling apples, or making dresses for a court-ball; had each their claim upon her sympathy and attention. She knew well the difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of raising the wages of industry to a class; she could only busy herself in removing the obstructions, as far as in her lay, which lie between these and their due reward—that is, the actual *price* value of their labors, a portion they do not often receive; in sheltering them from the temptations which so peculiarly beset them; diminishing the hardships of particular instances, and enabling them to provide for their old age.

A single woman herself, she constituted herself especially the guardian of the single and the unprotected.

The Governess' Institution was one of her especial favorites, and she had constituted several fellowships herself.

I think, after all I have said, I need scarcely return to describe the fittings-up of the pleasant apartment in which they now sit, its book-shelves upon one side, its office-shelves filled with documents of all descriptions upon the other; its two or three choice modern pictures, its two or three choice specimens of modern sculpture, its two easy chairs, and its table well stored with writing provision of all sorts.

There were *two* easy chairs, you observe.

And as Angela sat now looking round and taking note of the room, now watching the intelligent and earnest expression of Joan's face as she went through the papers laid there for her inspection, she learned why there were *two* arm-chairs, and why one was most peculiarly comfortable-looking.

One yet remained most valued and most dear, whose presence and whose affection had cheered, whose advice had guided, and

whose approbation had recompensed the wearied labors of her useful life.

Her minister.

While they were thus sitting together, the door of an inner room opened, and the minister appeared.

He was now become a very old man.

Ninety years he had seen.

His frame of the extremest tenuity, his stooping gait, his pale, thin face, and scanty gray hair, told of his great age, and of the labor of a life not past without the experience of much sorrow and care.

But his fine expanded brow, his still clear and intelligent eye, his mouth so grave, yet sweet, his whole venerable appearance, gave evidence that life had been spent wisely and well.

She whom he had followed, had venerated in life and supported in death, had long gone before him into those regions of ineffable and unsullied love and light into which he steadily, in the spirit, looked.

He had tarried, content to remain and attend the earthly pilgrimage of her so inexpressibly dear to them both.

He had stood by to strengthen and support her soul in its hours of darkness, and he had lived to exult in the rich harvest which had arisen under the ploughshare of sorrow.

He had lived to witness the full fruition of all those expectations which he and Mary had placed upon Jean.

With how much secret joy, with what calm seriousness of satisfaction, did he now see the child of those dearest hopes, the object of such intense interest, now playing that part which they had so fondly anticipated—a royalty of virtue and usefulness amid the daughters of women!

"How are you to-day, my dear Mr. M'Dougal? This is the first time we have met this morning," said Joan, rising from her chair as the door opened, taking him by both hands, and drawing him gently toward the fire. "I went out so early; and I would not disturb you, for I was afraid you had not slept well, as you were not stirring."

"The old eye is wakeful," said Mr. M'Dougal, "but the silence of midnight is not solitary. It is peopled with many spirits—the spirit of the past, which is rather solemn than mournful; and the spirit of the present, which you make serene. What have you been doing to-day, laborer in God's vineyard?" added he, sitting down in his arm-chair, and resting his hands upon his knees.

"I have been down upon this young lady's affairs into the very heart of that part of Westminster which, I believe, they used to call Tothill Fields."

“Miss Nevil, pray let me introduce you to Mr. M'Dougal, the oldest friend I have in the world ;” with a look and in a tone of voice which expressed all the warmth of her affection.

“Miss Nevil, sir. You who love energy will love Miss Nevil, who toils unremittingly in the ungrateful task of educating most unmanageable children, in order to maintain not only her own independence, but three children, the offspring of her father by a second wife. Do not blush, dear Angela,” as the color overspread the fair young creature's cheek ; “it is to give Mr. M'Dougal pleasure that I tell him of these things.”

“Let me take your hand, my dear,” said Mr. M'Dougal, with that authority which is given by great old age ; “and let me look into your fair young face. Yes, virtue is a noble thing, when it is the final and dear-bought result of a life of strong discipline ; but when we see it in the opening of the day—when it is as the free gift of God to a sweet and generous nature—then it is precious, indeed. Sweet young lady, I am not going to praise you, but to congratulate you.”

He still kept holding her hand, and his dim, blue eye scanned, with much attention, that sweet and interesting face.

“There are the lines of suffering and sorrow in it, I see,” said he ; “but there is the sure trust of faith, and the strength of a holy heart. The old man's blessings be upon thee, my child !”

“Is your letter finished ?” said Joan ; for a servant entered to fetch the letters for the post.

“Here it is ; and now,” looking with some uneasiness at the French clock upon the chimneypiece, “it is time, is it not, that I should go home ?”

“I believe it will be better, though I am very sorry to lose you. But will you excuse my going with you ? for I find so much here that must be done, and about which I must consult with Mr. M'Dougal, that I believe I can not spare time to go out again to-day : for really there is such a quantity of matter accumulated these two days, that I am afraid, my dear sir, if we work like horses we shall hardly get through it in time. I shall call upon you, my dear, in a day or two ; in the mean time, if you have an answer to your letter, and I can be of use to you in any way, you must write to me.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

It is one of the characteristics of a great mind, that it can contract and dilate itself.—SIR THOMAS RAFFLES.

AND so they parted. Angela returned to the labors of the school-room, while Joan, instead of going as was usual to the table and taking up a mass of reports, petitions, and various papers of that description, to be looked over and arranged, came and drew her chair beside Mr. M'Dougal, and said—

“I will begin with private business first. Here is a letter I want to talk to you about in the first place, and the affairs of that pretty young creature who has just left us is another. Oddly enough they are, in a certain point of view, connected together. Hear Mrs. Darby's letter first:—

“ *Palermo, — 7th, 18—.*

“MY DEAREST MISS GRANT,

“We have been in this most exquisite place now nearly six months, and Mr. Darby has not been idle; but the society here is, in many respects, in the very lowest state of degradation; and he finds all his efforts are vain to organize any thing like a rational system of amusement for the English gentlemen who may be found at this place. Only think of the barbarous way in which they conduct their horse-racing, for instance, and every thing is of a piece with it. Conceive of starting horses without jockeys, and with spurs dangling by a bit of ribbon to their sides, so that the horse is left to his unassisted efforts; and all the complication of circumstances produced by the jockeying of the jockey, the natural force of the horse—all which, as Mr. Darby says, constitute the very *animus* of betting, at an end.

“He has over and over again said, that unless he could organize something better, it would be impossible for him to exist here; indeed, poor man, he does nothing but yawn all day long, and walk up and down the streets with his hands in his pockets, staring about him. So the long and the short is, that he insists upon returning to England, and going down to that house of his in Cambridgeshire, that he may be near Newmarket, and so on. One can't wonder at

this, poor man ! it's quite natural. But what is to become of Augusta and me ?

“ You know what shocking luck he had last year ; well, it's of no use grieving about that ! But he has dipped himself immensely ; and, in short, how we are to live in England till Augusta comes of age, I don't know. This is such a cheap place, you can't conceive ; and it's excessively unlucky that we can't stay here. But Mr. Darby won't hear of it, and is it to be wondered at ?

“ Now, the worst is, that it will be quite impossible for us to come up to London this season : we absolutely have *not* the money. How Mr. Darby means to do for his betting, I am sure I can't guess. As for asking you, you stingy creature, to lend one a few hundreds, which you would *never* miss, I know of old it's no use, so I say nothing of it—except that it's horrid work for my poor nerves to have to live in that detestable Cambridgeshire, which is like being buried alive. However, I don't feel so much for myself as for Augusta.

“ I don't know how her affairs are going on, for she tells me nothing ; but Mr. Vavasour and she seem always quarreling. However, as Lady Missenden seems quite at ease about the subject, and as nothing is said, of course the old engagement stands.

“ He's a fine youth in his way ; but, to tell the truth, not much to my taste, and certainly not to Mr. Darby's. He calls him ‘ a poor snob,’ and ‘ a muff,’ and so on ; for he cares neither for driving, nor hunting, nor racing ; and, I verily believe, never had the spirit to make a bet in his life. What can one think of such a man ?

“ Such a fine spirit as Augusta has, I should have thought she would have absolutely abhorred him ; but, in spite of her being quarreling with him from morning to night (that is, talking *at* him, and abusing him to his face in her animated way, for he says so little himself, you can not think), I do think Augusta's very fond of him in her heart.

“ One reason is about drawing. Mr. Vavasour is forever drawing. He's out all day with his portfolio and things, and his paint-boxes, and he does bring home wonderfully beautiful sketches, that's certain ; and now nothing on earth will content Augusta but she must learn to draw too. There are no such things as masters to be got here—one must go to Rome or Naples for that ; and now this scheme has come into her head : you know what an inventive fine head she has.

“ Well, when I said, with my longest face, ‘ We must go to Cam-

bridgeshire, my dear, I am very much afraid!" she slapped her hand against her knee, and said, "Then I know what *I'll* do,—I'll learn drawing there, see if I won't!" Instead of vexing herself about being buried down in that horrid place, she actually said this,—“Then I'll learn drawing, see if I won't!”

“She does not seem to be sorry to come to England; but then the Missendens are about to move, bag and baggage, as soon as the weather's a little better. They come by sea, we by land; for we must be back by a certain day—when the grand match between Wildfire and Coromandel is to come off.

“My dear Miss Grant, I am perfectly shocked at this long scribble of mine, but I haven't quite done yet. You see you are such a dear, clever, good, creature, and you know such loads of governesses, and *dames de compagnie*, and things, and I don't know what, one never comes in vain to you.

“Now it strikes me, that though Augusta pretends not to care at all for this being buried alive (for it really is neither more nor less—at least, to me, I am sure), that she'll want a companion of her own age; and as for the drawing, why, bless me, she may get masters easier here than in Cambridgeshire! But, now, this is what I have thought of. You know young women are so clever and accomplished, and all that, nowadays, that, I dare say, if you would be so *very* kind, you could find us out some young person of Augusta's age who had nice manners, and was pretty and genteel looking; for Augusta, you know, abhors a fright and a muff, as she calls them, and would do nothing but turn them into ridicule from morning to night; but some nice, clever, agreeable young woman, who could keep her company in her walks—for walk she will, I know, when she gets there, and I can not bear her going out alone—and could read and chat with her when she wished it; and could, at the same time, teach her the rudiments of this drawing, which would be a great amusement to her, she seems to think. And as she absolutely knows nothing about it, you know, it would not require any very *great* artist to begin her.

“Now what do you think of my scheme? Do, pray, ponder it in your wisest head, that, I believe, ever was set on woman's shoulders; and if you think well of it, and if you think it will do, pray tell us of a young person that will suit, as I dare say you know hundreds and hundreds, which will be just the thing.

“My love to dear Mr. M'Dougal, and Augusta would send hers to you if she knew I was writing. She's just now out boating with her father, though it's a very squally day; but the rougher the day,

the more that girl likes it. I never saw such a high-spirited creature.

"Dear, what a quantity I have scribbled !

"Yours, dearest Miss Grant,

"Ever affectionately,

"LAURA DARBY.

"You need not make a screw bargain with the young woman.

"I know of old you like to make your friends pay handsomely upon these occasions. Augusta's trustees—though they are so hard with Mr. Darby, and allow such a miserable sum for her board and lodgings—never refuse to come down handsomely about masters, and so on. So please yourself about the terms, it won't hurt *us*."

This letter finished, but not before it had drawn forth from the minister a few of his quiet, sarcastic smiles, Joan folded it, and said—

"Now I have a case of conscience to consult you upon. I think this place would just suit that fine young creature whom I introduced you to; but then she has engaged herself to Mrs. Usherwood."

"Well," said Mr. M'Dougal, "and for how long has she contracted to be the white slave of that exemplary lady?"

"Of course for no definite time. Still, it seems never right to disturb these sort of arrangements; but it is my firm conviction that the exertions she is making to gain her miserable pittance of eighty pounds a-year must end by injuring her health. She certainly has prodigious energy, and a spirit that seems invincible; and the idea that she is slaving to provide for the wants of those little ones, supports her in a most astonishing manner. Yet still I can not help feeling sure that the exertion is too great: it is impossible she can go on at this rate of exhausting fatigue long. And then the innumerable smaller difficulties with which she has to contend!—the envious malice of the elder girls, the spiteful temper of Selina, the obstinate humors of Elizabeth, and the rude, unmanageable spirits of the little ones—it is too much. And even Mrs. Usherwood herself will be a loser, for she will soon find that she exacts more than it is possible to give, and that the over-loaded one will, finally, sink under her hands!"

"Then why do you ask me any questions about it? For you have made out so strong a case, that there is but one thing to be said."

"Because I think it so dishonorable," said the conscientious Joan,

“to interfere in any way with the dependants of a family into which one is admitted upon terms of intimacy. Situated as I am, there would be no end of it. I might be a receptacle for the complaints of every dissatisfied and unreasonable menial in every house I came near. I should become quite a public nuisance,” said she, laughing. “But never was creature more tempted to commit a misdemeanor of this description than I find myself at this moment.”

“Could you not persuade Mrs. Usherwood that it would be for her interest to dismiss the young thing?”

“Why, Mrs. Usherwood is rather a difficult person to deal with, you must know; and she is very apt to prize what other people want, merely because they want it. And yet I can not reconcile myself to the idea of not securing this place with Augusta Darby for Angela. She might be so happy there. One hundred a year, which I should ask for her, would set her so at ease; and Augusta Darby—who is really a fine, though sadly mismanaged, girl—I am sure, has sense enough to admire and treasure (perhaps, in some degree, imitate) such a fine, high-principled creature as Angela.”

“And not be jealous of her? She is inconveniently pretty, poor young thing!”

“And not be jealous of her, in spite of her being so pretty; for Augusta, in the first place, is a remarkably fine, handsome girl herself; and, besides, her heart is too warm and her spirit too high for such mean passions. That is one advantage, at least, of having had the world her own way in her youth; it never enters her head to be jealous of any one’s good fortune, which, as she takes the world, rarely can approach her own.”

“But you forget the drawing. Does this little paragon of yours possess that accomplishment, in addition to so many others?”

“Yes, to a very remarkable degree. She was giving lessons one day to my little favorite Theresa when I came in, and I was astonished at the ability she showed; and after the lesson was over I looked over her portfolio, and saw it had once been intended that she should be an artist. But I could not bear an artist’s life for her. This place with Augusta Darby would be ten thousand times better.”

“Then I see nothing for you but to attempt the impossible task of making Mrs. Usherwood as reasonable as Miss Grant, and as ready to sacrifice her own humors or wishes to the good of others.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

But haste we from these melancholy shores,
Nor to deaf winds and waves our fruitless plaint
Pour forth.

THOMSON.

BUT the matter was decided of itself in a much shorter time than any one had imagined.

For some time Angela had been suffering occasionally from intensely painful nervous headaches, the effect of over-exertion, and which never failed, when they occurred, to call forth the most severe animadversion from Mrs. Usherwood, and many ill-natured inuendoes from the young ladies.

But neither the animadversions of Mrs. Usherwood, nor the ill-nature of the young ladies, could prove stimulus sufficient to dissipate those attacks, which, being occasioned by too great exhaustion of the nervous powers, every additional effort only served to increase.

The intervals between the fits of illness became less, and the attacks themselves more intense in their character; still—as in cases of this nature it usually happens—she was tolerably at ease when not under their immediate influence; and as Miss Grant had never happened to witness one of them, and no complaints had been made, Joan was little aware of the true state of the case, otherwise it is probable all her scruples would have yielded to the urgent necessity of rescuing this young sufferer from her present situation, without further delay.

It had been a foggy, oppressive day; the east wind brought all the heavy miasma from the vast city toward this end of it, and the thick yellow vapors lay like a pestilential cloud upon the air.

She had found herself more languid than usual, and the children appeared, or had been, more than usually tiresome.

With temples throbbing as if they would burst, and eyes bloodshot and straining, she had sat in that close little schoolroom for several hours, vainly endeavoring to force her attention to her task.

It would not be; nature was completely exhausted. The words began to dance before her dizzy eyes, the sound of the children's voices to echo in a confused manner in her ears; her head dropped upon her hand, and she fell, for the moment, into a sort of stupor.

She was aroused by the gentle hand of Theresa pulling at hers which covered her eyes, and saying—

“Oh, you have got a bad headache, I’m sure—almost as bad as mine; you can’t do any thing if it’s like mine—you had better go to bed and lie down.”

“I believe I had,” said Angela, looking up in a confused manner, and seeming scarcely to know where she was, or what she said.

“Tell them to mind their lessons, will you, dear? I must go up stairs and be quiet. Oh, my head!”

This slight complaint was wrung from her by the almost insupportable agony of the pain.

“May I go up with you and fetch you some sal volatile, and make you comfortable?” said the little girl, affectionately.

“Thank you—thank you!” was all she could say.

She could scarcely see, and scarcely stand. They left the room together.

Selina and Elizabeth, as usual, exchanged ill-natured smiles, and the little girls laughed aloud.

“We shall have another poorly governess,” said they; “and such fun!”

And far from minding their lessons, they began to jump about and make a prodigious noise.

“What’s all this noise that I hear?” said Mrs. Usherwood, suddenly opening the door; “I can absolutely hear you down into the drawing-room. Miss Nevil!—where’s Miss Nevil? And where’s Theresa?”

“Miss Nevil’s got a bad headache, and is gone to lie down, and she sent Theresa to get her some sal volatile.”

“Upon my word!” said Mrs. Usherwood, firing up; “she is, is she?”

She was soon at Miss Nevil’s door.

“May I come in?” said she, opening it without knocking, and without waiting for an answer.

“Well, Miss Nevil, I hope you find your bed comfortable! A very proper place for a young person at midday, upon my word! I heard the children making a tremendous noise; we were quite disturbed in the drawing-room. I come up stairs, and I find their governess on her bed!”

“I am extremely sorry, madam,” faltered Angela, turning round, for she lay with her face to the wall, and endeavored to shade the light from her aching eyes with her hand; “but I have such a dreadful headache—I really could not sit up any longer.

I hope it will be better soon, and that I shall be able to go down again."

"I hope so, indeed," said Mrs. Usherwood, drily. "I pretend to no great experience in headaches; I have never time to be ill, whatever others may have. But it's rather hard upon me, I must say, to fall in with another invalid governess; and when you assured me, too, that your health was so good."

"Indeed it was, madam, when I first came here."

"And do you mean to insinuate that there is any thing in this place that can have affected your health? I think," said Mrs. Usherwood, indignantly, "that after the miserable doghole that I brought you from, you would not have thought of precisely representing the apartments in Mr. Usherwood's house as injurious to your health. I don't know what luxuries you would have that are denied you; but since Miss Grant has taken so much notice of you, you do not know exactly what you would be at, I presume. I never heard of these headaches till lately."

"They did not come on till lately," said Angela, pressing her forehead with both hands; "but now they are so bad!"

And the pain absolutely forced the tears into her eyes.

"You make a great deal of a little thing," said Mrs. Usherwood, "I must think. Headaches are the commonest things in the world; but this is the first time I ever heard of their making any body cry. Even Theresa—poor little thing—has a little more resolution than that. I must beg of you not to exhibit this weakness before the children."

The answer was only a groan. The pain she was in was insupportable, and nothing but the most perfect quiet could relieve it; and the dreaded presence of Mrs. Usherwood seemed to drive her almost to distraction.

"And you attribute your headaches to the rooms, I suppose?" said Mrs. Usherwood, looking round; "as if this was not good enough for you!"

"Oh! not that—not that," said the poor sufferer: "more likely it is the work. Indeed, I wish to do it; but it is too much—too much!" said she; and as the words trembled upon her lips, she sank back insensible upon her pillow.

In spite of her principles of incredulity with regard to illness, Mrs. Usherwood could not help being a little alarmed at this. She hastily left the room, and summoning the housekeeper—who, in this house, was supposed not only to be the substitute for the mistress in carrying out her financial arrangements, but in the performance

of many important duties, among which attending upon the sick and visiting the poor may be enumerated—she went down stairs, a good deal vexed and a little hurried, and rejoined her elder daughters in the drawing-room.

I don't think that the least feeling of pity for the poor young creature, thus—like the high-mettled courser fallen in the shafts—sinking under the weight of the duties that necessity had forced upon her, visited Mrs. Usherwood's bosom at this moment.

She was not, in the main, an ill-natured woman—nay, had the reputation of being a tolerably good-natured one; and so she was when no interests of her own interfered with such feelings. She liked very well to be the dispenser of pleasure to others when, at the same time, she did not inconvenience herself; but she had none of that consistent regard for the rights, or that benevolent sympathy with the wants and sufferings, of her fellow-creatures, which is the source of those innumerable self-sacrifices to equity, or efforts in the cause of benevolence, which mark the course of the just and the kind.

As regarded those dependent upon her, this was more particularly the case; her parsimony made her a rigorous exacter of stipulated services, without reference to the health or powers of those to whom they were committed; weakness or sickness in those receiving her wages always excited her indignation rather than pity. She thought only of her own loss, and forgot their misfortune.

Mrs. Usherwood—and there are many Mrs. Usherwoods in the world—considered herself wronged when people were incapacitated.

It was impossible to resist the evidences of Miss Nevil's indisposition. There was nothing remaining for her except to be very much vexed, and think herself the person very much to be pitied, for this provoking *contretemps*. It was so hard upon her, after having got rid of one sickly governess, to be plagued immediately with another; "it was enough to vex a saint." Some people seem to think the saints had very irritable tempers.

So she opened the drawing-room door, where the three Miss Usherwoods were sitting employed in a sort of strenuous idleness; one copying music into a beautiful little hot-pressed music-book, another inserting prints from "The Keepsake" into an album, a third with her frame of embroidery before her, saying—

"Did you ever hear any thing so provoking? This girl—this Miss Nevil—has actually fallen ill, too!"

"Oh," said Matilda, "as for that, I think you need not bother

yourself much about that. Miss Nevil's ill and well, if we are to believe Selina and Elizabeth, very much depends upon how she chooses it to be."

"That wouldn't be so intolerable," said Mrs. Usherwood, "for one can soon frighten people out of these imaginary illnesses. But this is a great deal more provoking; for there is no flattering one's self—she really is ill. And what *am* I to do with her?"

"Send her home, I should think," said Lucy.

"That's easily said, Miss Lucy," was the mother's reply, who always felt irritated when people proposed an easy remedy for her domestic perplexities; "but she really, with all her faults, suits me very well, and it's not so easy to get another."

"I should think nothing on earth was more easy," said Lucy; "the loads and loads of young women that want places."

"Nothing surprises me more," put in the eldest sister, who was bending over her embroidery frame, "than the plague people give themselves about getting servants, and governesses, and so on. Why, the columns of 'The Times' are loaded with advertisements of people begging for places! I am sure, if I had a house like mamma to manage, it should be a word and a blow with me; I would never keep an incompetent person for a day."

The young lady who gave this energetic advice was one who never gave herself trouble about any one earthly thing. She spent her time between her embroidery-frame and idle company, and would and could not exert herself so far as to discharge a maid who teased her in every way, relying upon her mistress's indolence to retain one whom her habit of doing absolutely nothing for herself had rendered necessary to her.

Lucy and Matilda, both of them much more quick-sighted than their sister, who was in the habit of uttering these sort of absolute ideas, and, in consequence, thinking herself a woman of a very strong character, exchanged somewhat sarcastic smiles at this sortie, which Miss Usherwood having uttered, she bent her head over her frame again and relapsed into silence.

"Old maids' husbands and bachelors' children," and so on, Mrs. Usherwood comforted herself with saying, but ended with—"I really don't know what must be done."

"Send her away," said Matilda; most glad to be delivered from the presence of a person in the family whose beauty and accomplishments, whenever she was produced, threw her own so much into the shade. "Send her away at once; it's plain she either is, or thinks herself, quite too delicate a person for what she has to do

here. You will have nothing but conflicts as long as she stays with us."

"And then we shall have Joan Grant making one of her long disapproving faces, I know," said Lucy.

This last remark seemed to arouse Mrs. Usherwood's attention.

She stopped where she was, put her finger to her face, and seemed considering.

She was considering whether the terms upon which she wished to stand with Miss Grant would be best secured by dismissing or by retaining this young creature.

This poor young creature, with three little children dependent upon her for bread.

Believe it as you will, or not—I hope a great, great many of you, will find it impossible to believe it—the situation of Miss Nevil herself never once crossed Mrs. Usherwood's thoughts. While debating this matter with herself, never did she once reflect upon the injury she had herself inflicted upon a girl so young and delicate, by thus suffering the willing laborer to tax herself beyond her strength, nor upon the utter ruin to all her prospects, which might be the result of this incapacitating illness. She cast not one thought upon any thing beyond her own interests and her own convenience, both as regarded the keeping of a very valuable and cheap governess, or with relation to Miss Grant.

But the promptings of jealousy prevailed at length over every other consideration; Angela was evidently becoming a favorite with Miss Grant, to the exclusion, as it appeared to her, of her own daughters, whom that lady seemed to like and notice less and less every day. This illness furnished a good excuse for setting her aside; so she kept repeating it was quite contrary to all her principles—and she hated to deviate from her principles—to retain any person of delicate health in her service.

"I think it will be better to get rid of her at once, as you say, Matilda," was the result of her rumination; and in these words she communicated it to her daughters.

The fall of a favorite is always the signal for a general attack upon all sides,

The hawks and kites gather round the expiring lamb.

"I am so glad!" cried Lucy and Matilda.

"You are quite right, mamma," decided Miss Usherwood.

And then all sorts of little disparaging sentences followed; such as—

"I never liked her; she's much too fine for her place; never can

forget she was the daughter of some officer or another. As for the children, they can't abide her; she's so strict with some, and spoils the others. Selina and Elizabeth can never do any thing right; Theresa and Julia, never any thing wrong."

"My mind is made up," said Mrs. Usherwood, with decision; "and the sooner I communicate my resolution the better."

Now much of this barbarity upon the part of Mrs. Usherwood, which will to many appear, I hope incredible, arose not only from her obstinate habit of not choosing to believe people were sick till the fact was proved beyond contradiction, but from a far worse disposition, not uncommon among selfish people, of being absolutely jealous of any one being really ill.

To be indisputably ill carries with it a certain distinction, in some people's eyes—people in such circumstances demand *some* consideration; *some* indulgences, *some* *égards*, must be granted to their necessities, which these sort of spirits can not bear to bestow.

The *Grand Monarque* was in his domestic tyranny, a signal instance of this species of pride and selfishness, which infests many a smaller household.

While this conversation was going on in the drawing-room, Angela had been left to the care of the housekeeper.

"Like master like man."

Oh, how true those old proverbs are!

Mrs. Richards was just as hard and skeptical in cases of sickness as Mrs. Usherwood, and more ill-tempered, because upon her devolved the trouble of attending to them.

Her remedies were, however, judicious, though roughly administered; and Angela, recalled to herself, now first felt the cruel want of that ministering kindness which she had so often herself bestowed, and to the full value of which she was happily insensible till sickness had laid its depressing hand upon her in its turn, and the brave independence of little evils which she had so long maintained was at an end.

Oh, how her poor aching head longed to repose upon some kind sustaining arm; her dazzled eyes to rest in a tempered light; her vibrating ear to be soothed with the soft whispering of affection—those tones with which she had so often soothed her poor Margaret! Her lips were parched with thirst, but there was no one to offer her refreshment; in the timidity of her weakened spirits she dared not ask for tea.

"A little cold water, pray."

"But there happened to be none in the room. The careless housemaid had not filled her bottles; and Mrs. Richards—fat Mrs. Richards—did not offer to go down the steep stairs to fetch her any.

She sat there by the bedside drawing her heavy breath; the sound of every thick inspiration striking in regular pangs upon the nervously excited ear, just as the ticking of a clock which others can not even hear, becomes a torment insupportable to those with nerves thus affected, like the drop of water falling at measured intervals upon the head. So sat Mrs. Richards puffing like a porpoise, and watching her poor patient with an impatience she did not attempt to disguise, uttering, from time to time, a fretful—

"Don't you feel better yet?—Isn't your head easier?—I'm sure you look better!"

What governesses suffer from the insolence of servants is often, I believe, a most heavy item in their painful and difficult life, and is a matter the mother and mistress should carefully keep her eye upon.

Mrs. Usherwood opened the door and came in.

"Well, Richards, how are you going on?"

"She says she's no better," was Richards's reply. "Could I speak to you, ma'am?"

And the mother and the housekeeper stepped into the little passage together.

"Well, what do you think of her, Richards?"

"I don't know exactly what to make of it, ma'am. But she's really very ill, that's certain; and I think, ma'am, if you will take my advice, you'll send her out of the house while she can be moved. It's like the beginning of a fever—and only think of the dear children!"

Mrs. Usherwood would have been very glad indeed to have acceded to this proposal, and thus have relieved herself of the burden of her presence for a day, after having resolved upon discharging her; but while she was meditating how to carry the measure into effect, all at once it struck her, "What would Miss Grant say to such a proceeding?" Having no conscience of her own, Miss Grant's conscience served in some slight degree as a substitute; and it is astonishing how much good people of Miss Grant's influence often do accomplish, simply by furnishing people with what they so very much want: their known and uncompromising censure of what is unfeeling and wrong, keeps people alive upon the subject.

Mrs. Usherwood felt certain Miss Grant would disapprove of thus turning her out of the house as a very harsh and unjustifiable pro-

ceeding, unless the measure could be defended by the more pressing one of dangerous infection ; and even then she might not be quite satisfied as to its humanity. To keep her in ignorance of the proceeding would be impossible.

"Do you think there is any danger of infection then ?" she said, hoping Richards would answer in the affirmative.

But Richards could not pledge her medical reputation upon so palpable a misrepresentation ; so she only said—

"Wherever there's a bad headache, one does not know what may come of it."

"It would be a satisfaction to know," said Mrs. Usherwood ; "for I don't think one could very well send her out of the house in her present state unless there was danger to the children."

"Perhaps we'd better send for Mr. Trueman, and ask his opinion," suggested Richards.

"I hate sending for him ; he does run up such bills," answered her mistress. "It's too bad to have to go to all this expense and have a person falling sick upon one's hands—utterly useless—and a mere expense to one—which I am sure I am very ill able to bear. I thought you could tell me at once whether there was any danger of infection, Richards," added Mrs. Usherwood, peevishly.

"Well, so I think I can ; only I'll not vouch for it. I don't think there's any, but it may be the beginning of a long, troublesome illness—who knows ? And the best way would be to get her out of the house while we can."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

COWPER.

THE object of this heartless consultation lay, meanwhile, extended upon her little pallet, her face pressed downward upon her pillow, endeavoring, if possible, to lull the agony of intense pain.

Courageous she was, and patient she was. Patience is the offspring of true courage. She had, too, as you well knew, within her, that source of true courage and of inexhaustible patience, the most childlike obedience and submission to the decrees of that great Father

from whose righteous hand she received, in cheerful faith and firm reliance, all the painful circumstances of her life.

In Him she trusted now, and received the excruciating pain which throbbed in her temples with that resignation, that submission, that love more than both, which sweetened even this agony, and fulfilled the gracious promise of a peace which shall not fail.

Exemption from suffering she had never been promised, but peace she had, and she experienced it.

Yet, resigned as she was, strong as was that good courage, and firm as was that fabric planted upon a rock, it was with a shock of terror not to be expressed that she listened to Mrs. Usherwood's cruel sentence.

"I am afraid, Miss Nevil," that lady had said, as she stood by the side of the little bed, and watched her endeavoring vainly to suppress her groans and diminish the agony she endured by squeezing her forehead against her pillow, "that you are really going to be very ill—Richards says so, and I think so myself; but, well or ill, it is evident to me that your strength is not equal to my situation, and, therefore, I do you a kindness by mentioning this at once. As I can not afford to lose time, I shall begin to-morrow to inquire for a person to fill your place. But I beg," seeing poor Angela lift her head suddenly from the pillow and glance at her with an eye of anxious terror—"I beg you will not hurry yourself; you are quite welcome to stay here till you feel well enough to go home; only, as there is no engagement about warning, or so on, and this is certainly your own fault—I mean your own misfortune—I think you can not expect the stipulated salary shall be long continued, when you are so utterly incapable of performing the stipulated services."

"Oh, my children! my children!" burst from the poor young creature's heart, as, utterly overwhelmed by this new and most unexpected misfortune, her spirits suddenly gave way; violent hysterics followed—she laughed and screamed, and wept and struggled, in turns.

Mrs. Usherwood, thoroughly frightened at this dreadful scene—for in that lion frame of hers she possessed a coward heart—hurried out of the room, leaving the unhappy girl to Richards; who, hastening in, applied the usual old-fashioned remedy of scolding, and rating, and endeavoring to terrify the agitated girl into her senses again.

"Well, I've seen quite enough," said Mrs. Usherwood, as she went down stairs; "this exhibition has settled the matter with me."

The paroxysm was long, but it yielded at last to Mrs. Richards's methods, good or bad. Angela sank back exhausted into a half-stupor, half-slumber, and Mrs. Richards, confiding her to the care of the under-housemaid, went down to refresh herself with a cup of tea and buttered muffins.

Now, such is human life.

In ideal inventions of this nature it is easy to heap misery upon misery, till, too carelessly receiving them as a picture of human history, our faith in the merciful dispensations of Providence is troubled and darkened, for want of correcting the tragic picture of the romancer with our own actual experience of things as they have happened to ourselves.

In fact, the workings of actual life—the workings of Providence, as the eye of faith must receive them—are, at least as far as my observation has gone, like the workings of this beautiful and yet impaired creation which surrounds us—full of compensations.

Unmitigated evil is very rare, and whenever it occurs, very brief: some unlooked-for relief, some unexpected alleviation, springs up where it is least looked for:—the Angel of His presence visits the perishing Hagar, though not revealed in the full glory of His outward form.

It was a little thing in itself, but a great thing here.

The under-housemaid was a kind, simple-hearted young woman, laboring under oppression herself beneath the iron sway of a harsh upper-housemaid—a servant of servants. She had experience to enable her to understand, and a heart to enable her to sympathize, with the same species of suffering in others.

Some—woe is me!—who have suffered from iniquitous tyranny themselves, revenge themselves, as it were, upon others, when power falls into their hands, by inflicting the very miseries they have themselves endured: but there are better and gentler natures, and this girl's was one of them.

Hannah was a very kind-hearted, and also a sensible girl; and as she sat down by Angela to watch her for the night, to sit up with her after a day of hard labor, she never once thought about herself or her aching legs, or that it was too bad, after slaving all day, to be kept out of her bed at night; but, coming into the room as gently as she could, and gazing upon the pale face of the sleeping girl, she said to herself—

“Poor young thing! poor dear! Well, heart alive, but it is a pity, and she so young and pretty like!”

And then gently letting fall the curtain, to screen the candle from her eyes, she took out her sewing, and sat down by her side.

The night-lamp was flickering in its socket, but the cold dawn had not begun to break, when Angela opened her eyes and saw the good creature, who had at last dozed off herself, sitting by her.

It was an inexpressible relief to find the kind Hannah, instead of the terrible Mrs. Richards, in attendance; and this perhaps it was which soothed the still excitable nerves, and enabled her to lie quite still as she did, endeavoring to collect her thoughts and review her situation.

She lay so for a long time—the last words of Mrs. Usherwood still sounding in her ears—considering what would become of her.

Was she upon the eve of a long illness, which would, perhaps for weeks, perhaps for months, incapacitate her for all exertion, and render it impossible for her to provide for the children, to say nothing of the increased expenses, which she knew must be the inevitable consequence?

And was her salary to cease from so very soon?

What was to become of them all?

Had all her endeavors to do her duty resolutely—her struggles with pain and weariness—her self-sacrifice and daily victory over those voices within which were tempting her to indulgence and to rest—had they ended in this? In making her a helpless prisoner upon a bed of pain, while her little brothers and sister were crying for food?

“Oh, measure my trial to my strength!”

The words were ejaculated half aloud, and Hannah awoke from her doze.

“Did you want any thing, Miss Nevil?” said she, starting up. “How do you feel? I hope you are better. Are you a little better?”

“The very bad pain seems gone,” said Angela.

“Oh, then I hope you will be able to get up soon, for Mrs. Usherwood don’t like people to be poorly, you know!”

Angela shook her head.

“You do not know how ill I feel, Hannah. I shall try to get up, of course; but I do not think I can stand.”

“But I hope you *will*,” said the girl, anxiously; “because, you know, Mrs. Usherwood will not excuse you—she never does any body.”

“I know that,” said Angela, sadly; “but it is not of much consequence now—she discharged me last night.”

Hannah let her hands fall into her lap, with an exclamation of sorrow and surprise.

"No, really, she didn't!—and you so good to the children, and making such a slave of yourself!"

"I could not go on with that."

"No, I don't think you could; and, indeed, I have wondered how you kept on so long. I've watched you, Miss Nevil, though you did not perceive it, and I've seen how your color was beginning to come and go, and how you seemed all as if your legs were trembling under you when you went up stairs to bed. It's just how it used to be before my bad illness, when I was maid-of-all-work to Mrs. Sims."

"Have you had an illness like mine?" asked Angela, interested in any thing which might afford indications of the nature of the evil which seemed impending over herself.

"Why, Miss Nevil, it was not exactly like; but it was from the same cause—over-work. I've long said how it would end with you, sooner or later; but I hope you won't have to go to the hospital as I had."

"The hospital!—had you to go to the hospital?" cried Angela, with an accent of terror natural at the first mention of the name.

"Not to the hospital!—oh, not to the hospital!" she ejaculated internally; "save me only from that!"

"The hospital is not a very bad place now, I believe," said Hannah; "for since that great and clever Mr. Dickens has written about it Did you ever read the story, Miss Nevil? it's so pretty. Mr. Ruddiman, the butler, takes in all Mr. Dickens's works, and he lends them to me to read of a Sunday, sometimes. Well, Miss, that Mr. Dickens makes great fun, but then he has such a feeling for the poor, it seems as if he could not bear the thought of seeing any body ill-used. But then, Miss," added Hannah, in her simple criticism, "don't you think it's a pity so good a gentleman makes so light of the sin of drinking? He who seems to see every thing so natural, must have seen what misery it brings on the poor, as witness my poor, dear father, who died in the *tremens*—so shocking! One could think Dickens never took count of all the numbers of people—gentlemen's servants, shop-boys, little tradesmen, and such-like, who think such a great deal about him. I've heard some say Dickens's books are next to the Bible. Oh, I wish he'd write a story about drinking, or at least put in some of his clever, clever words against it—don't you?"

Angela was not so well read in Dickens as Hannah, nor in the least degree aware of the immense and daily extending power which

he wielded; so she did not take up the subject, as Joan would have done, had she been in her place, but said,

“ You were telling me of going to the hospital.”

“ Yes, Miss. It’s a good many years ago since I was there; I was a very young girl then, about thirteen, and now I’m past twenty. I was thinking of the nurses; they used to be so rough and careless, and thinking of nothing but themselves, and the poor patients suffered many and many a thing from them; but it’s all altered, as I have heard, now, from those who have been in lately; for none of the nurses likes to be called a Sarah Gamp.”

“ But Mrs. Usherwood will never send me to the hospital, surely?” said Angela.

“ No, I don’t think she will, Miss,” said Hannah, looking rather knowing; “ because there’s other friends to the poor besides Mr. Dickens; and she’d no more like Miss Grant to think her unfeeling, than those nurses do to be called Sarah Gampses.”

The idea of Joan Grant, as a refuge in her extremity, had suggested itself to Angela before, but she had not found much comfort in it. The situation seemed one that was beyond the claims of a casual acquaintance sort of friendship such as theirs. It was, in fact, to impose nothing less than the maintenance of a family upon any one who should determine to relieve her; but now, in her fear and perplexity, the idea again recurred. At least, her influence might be of some avail in softening Mrs. Usherwood’s harsh decrees; at all events her advice and sympathy would be invaluable. She would venture to beg of this kind friend to visit her, and she could do it with the less difficulty as she was not yet an utter beggar. She need not yet ask alms, her little hoard of money, so carefully husbanded, was not quite exhausted; she need only crave support and advice.

“ I wish Miss Grant were here,” said she.

“ And so do I,” responded Hannah, “ with all my heart. She’s *such* a lady, that is—the good she does to gentle and simple is unknown. But why should you not ask her to come to you, Miss Nevil? she never was known to refuse to come to the sick-bed of any one that asked her, be they never so lowly and miserable. And wouldn’t she come to yours?—to be sure she would!”

“ I wish I could write to her, but my eyes are so dizzy, and my hand shakes so, I am afraid I could not hold a pen.”

“ I’m but a bad penwoman myself, Miss Nevil, but I learned a little at the charity-school—perhaps I could make a shift, if you would tell me what to say.”

"Will you try, dear Hannah? What should I have done if you had not been so good to me!"

"Miss, I've thought a good deal about goodness to my fellow-creatures, since I've read Dickens and known Miss Grant. One very often does not think what people may suffer till it's put down in a book, and then one's heart quite bleeds about it. And one doesn't think what any one may do, till one sees a lady like Miss Grant humbling herself to the least little thing that may comfort any one in trouble. Oh, she's done such kind, kind things to many I know, you can't think. One's only to be unhappy, and Miss Grant's one's friend; and she was *your* friend before, and now she will be thrice your friend."

"Here's your pen and ink, if I may use it, Miss Nevil," she went on, after looking about for what she wanted; "and may I take this nice paper? La, how pleasant to write upon! it's like satin!" said Hannah, arranging herself to write by Angela's bedside, and raising her wrist and crooking her fingers, according to the most approved method of rendering penmanship difficult if not impossible. It was a scrawl, but it *was* possible to decipher it, and it contained these few words—

"MY DEAR MISS GRANT,

"I am very ill I am afraid, and my head is so confused that I can not very well think of my own affairs; yet circumstances are very pressing. Would you be so good as to come and see me? it would be a great charity.

ANGELA."

"I'll slip down and put this in the post with my own hands," said the good-natured Hannah; "and you see if she don't come."

Joan Grant was at breakfast with Mr. M'Dougal when the note was put into her hands.

"See!" said she; "what I feared has taken place: this poor girl has fallen ill, and at a most unlucky moment."

"That may be as it will prove," said her friend: "this illness may at least unrivet the fetters that bind her free agency and your delicate conscience, my dear. Relieved from the slavery you have described to me, we shall soon see the pretty young thing well again; youth is so elastic, has such an invincible power of re-action."

Joan rose to ring the bell and order her carriage.

"I am all impatience to be with her. It is, as you say, more than probable that Mrs. Usherwood will be as glad to get rid of her now, as I shall be to take her off her hands. She will be happy in

herself, and invaluable to others, as the companion of Augusta Darby."

And during this time, while relief she little anticipated was at hand, the poor girl, alone in her little close room, but her mind somewhat restored to its usual equilibrium, and her head relieved by the few hours of sleep she had enjoyed, lay by herself (for Hannah had been obliged to leave her to begin the work of the day), meditating upon her forlorn position.

She then first felt the full extent of those difficulties to which those laboring for their daily bread are exposed; difficulties which at a distance had appeared so little formidable to an enterprising and unbroken spirit, and which had vanquished her in the very outset of her career.

There she lay, the strife with fortune scarcely even begun, a victim to the unheard-of exertions which the meanness and hard-heartedness of others had imposed upon her; imposed by those upon whose benevolence she had no absolute claim, it was true, and who on that account seemed to think themselves justified in casting her aside, as they might have done some worthless household utensil, the moment she ceased to be of use.

Those numerous ties of connection, fellowship, and relationship, which link men together, and bind them to the support of each other in the arduous struggles for existence, were not for her; there was not one human being upon whom she had what is called a legitimate claim.

She was lying, alone and deserted, in this obscure chamber of this large and busy house.

The sound of coming and going, the ringing of bells, the confusion of voices, the loud rattings at the door, which shook her poor head as if it would shiver it to pieces, the runnings up and down stairs, the banging of doors, all the noises of an awakened household, unsubdued by tenderness for the poor sufferer on her sick-bed, all reminded her of that busy living life from which she was now excluded.

That current, flowing on only as it were to sweep her poor valueless fragment forever away.

Surely no fate can be so melancholy as that of sickness under such circumstances.

Then she tried to comfort herself with thinking of Miss Grant. It was the only idea, indeed, to which she could turn with any satisfaction. How kind she had been to her! and how kind she seemed to every one! Joan Grant had not been happy herself;

she could feel for others with a sympathy unknown to those who have never known what sorrow was. But, after all, what could she do for her?

With strength to pursue her profession as an instructor, nothing was more easy than to assist her in obtaining a new place; with Miss Grant's large connections and influence, she felt certain that she could, and that she would, render her that service; but if incapacitated by sickness, what could even Miss Grant do?

She felt, in truth, at this moment, what many of excitable nerves and delicate frames, however good their general health, have felt—that it will be impossible to persevere in that particular line of exertion under which the strength has given way, even though that strength should be in great measure restored.

She had not complained, and she had fought courageously against this failing of the body, till she had absolutely broken down, and further resistance was vain; but she now recollected, with something like terror, the gradual advance of her present malady—how for the last week she had every day entered the schoolroom, as she thought and hoped, refreshed by the repose of the night, and how invariably the process of teaching had brought the headache on.

At first, late in the day, when she was quite exhausted; but, by insidious degrees, the hour when the pain returned was earlier, the interval of ease shorter, till there was no perfect interval of ease at all; and the increase of the disorder had been only marked by the increased intensity of suffering, until the torment had become intolerable, and thrown her helpless where she lay.

She trembled to think that, even when restored to a certain degree by rest and abstinence from labor, the headache would return as soon as the employment which had occasioned it was resumed.

And yet her mind turned to Miss Grant with a sort of hope.

A vague, ill-defined, but still a cheering hope, that a being so benevolent, so powerful, and so wise, would find means to assist her in her perplexities.

Many were the raps, loud and long, at the house door, and in every one she thought she could distinguish the hand of Miss Grant's footman.

At length there was a ring and no knock; footsteps were heard ascending the stairs, one flight after another, and they approached her door—it opened, and Joan Grant appeared.

Her face you know was plain, but her countenance was singularly sweet and expressive, with her large, dark, kind eyes, and her gentle, somewhat melancholy, smile.

But now that smile was more sweet, those eyes more full of kind encouragement than ever, as approaching the bedside, sitting down, and taking the hot, trembling hand of the poor girl, she said—

“Mrs. Usherwood has told me what has passed. I hope you are not very ill, for this indisposition, I trust, will be but the precursor of better and happier days. It was impossible you could have gone on in this way long.”

“I felt it so—I have been feeling it so some time: but one is so unwilling to believe that one’s body is more than a match for one. I thought determination would do any thing, and I was so anxious to persevere.”

“Ah, my dear, the pride of our youth and strength! But it is well, while sickness and infirmity are the lot of so large a portion of this world, that we should, all in our turns, learn by experience what it is to suffer. You might, my dear Angela, had you been able to persist in your generous career, have believed that every thing was possible to a resolute will—alas! nothing can be more mistaken. But you are now released from your engagement with Mrs. Usherwood: is it not so?”

“Don’t blame her,” said Angela, “It is not her fault; you know I could not expect her to keep one who could not perform the duties of her place, and that is my misfortune. If it were my indolence, my carelessness, my incapacity, I could mend; but I have done the best I possibly could, though she does not know it—indeed I have.”

“You need not assure *me* of that,” said Miss Grant. “Well, my dear, when things are at the worst they must mend: it is a homely proverb, but it has preserved many an overtaxed spirit from despair. And now this sad illness, which must almost have thrown *you* into despair, and this sudden dismissal by Mrs. Usherwood, will prove, I trust, and I really believe, a very fortunate circumstance. I have heard of something that I think you will like very much, and that will just suit you; and I was sadly perplexed in my mind yesterday to determine whether it would be right to communicate it to you or not. Now I have no further scruples. But you must get well.”

Angela shook her head mournfully.

“Do not think me weak, or hypochondriacal, or fanciful—it seems shocking to say so—but I *must* rest a little while from teaching.”

“I know that—I have seen cases of this sort before; the employment which has been the occasion of this sort of break-down of the nerves, can not with impunity be taken up again for a considerable time: but there will be only a very little teaching required in this case, and of a totally different description. To instruct a talented

young lady, and to drag forward through the paths of learning a set of unwilling children, are very different tasks," said she; "and I think you may venture, in a short time, to undertake the one I am proposing: in fact, you will only be expected to give a few drawing lessons, and I do not think you will dislike that. You will find it rather amusing to teach a young lady of about your own age, that is, if it suits the ebbs and flows of her humor to learn; and for the rest of your time, you will only have to play the part of sister to her—a sister a little wiser, a little more disciplined, and a little more experienced in the art of living to some profit, than herself."

The light, so long obscured, shone again in Angela's eyes at this announcement; but she could hardly believe her own senses.

"Is it possible?" she said; "dear Miss Grant, is it possible?"

"You will have one hundred pounds a-year, I hope, and that will enable you to provide a little better for the children at home," Joan went on, looking at her with that peculiar air of kind and tender interest which made her own countenance at times so charming. "But the first thing to be done is to get well, for you must gather up your best looks, and your best wits, and your best spirits, I can tell you, to be a match for the fair Augusta Darby."

"Is that the young lady's name? What a pleasant-sounding name!"

"Yes, and it belongs to a very fine girl—a very nice girl, I may say, in spite of all her faults; for she has quite her share of those interesting things. But you are to cure her."

"I cure her! I, who have no experience, and feel as if now I had lost all the little strength of body or mind I ever had!"

"It will come again, my dear, in due time; don't be discouraged about that. But we will speak about this another time; at present we must talk of your removal. I don't think that you will improve while you remain here. The house is too bustling and noisy for you; you had better at once come to me. Do you think you can muster courage to rise and attempt the removal?"

"Oh, yes; I will get up directly and be ready."

I suppress all the expressions of thankfulness that broke forth from time to time, as, with the assistance of the kind Hannah, who was again summoned, Angela managed to complete her toilet and prepare for her departure. Miss Grant, in the mean while, anxious to spare her all fresh excitement, going down stairs to announce her immediate departure to Mrs. Usherwood, and take leave, by proxy, both of that lady and of the children.

She found Mrs. Usherwood somewhat uneasy in her mind. The

hasty feelings of irritation and vexation under which she had so unfeelingly dismissed her governess having subsided, she had the grace to feel a little remorseful for her proceedings, and received Miss Grant with something very like embarrassment.

Joan's manner was certainly colder than usual. Mrs. Usherwood made what excuses she could for herself, dilating upon her fear of low fever, infection, and so on; the absolute necessity of having a fresh governess in her turbulent schoolroom; and, in short, running through those reasons, as she called them, which had served to blind her own mind to the cruelty of her conduct.

Miss Grant listened patiently, and then announced her intention of immediately removing Angela to her own house.

The leave-taking with the children was a more interesting matter. In spite of their inclination to resist her authority, and their tormenting and teasing habits, Angela had been gradually acquiring real influence over their minds, and a place in their affections. The elder girls looked blank, and loudly declared their sorrow at the intelligence; poor little Theresa sat crying at her desk.

Miss Grant was pleased. She consoled them as well as she could by promising they should all come to her house to see Miss Nevil, when she was a little better; and kissing little Theresa, said she should see Miss Nevil very often, and help to nurse her sometimes, if she would try to be cheerful with the next governess.

Angela was now ready. She descended the stairs, and entering Miss Grant's carriage took leave, as we do, of Mrs. Usherwood.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Form'd in the prodigality of nature;
Endearing, generous, gay, and wild.

THERE are moments in life, when the various comforts which the researches of science and the arts of luxury have accumulated around us in this comfortable age, may be considered in the light of real and most substantial blessings.

Many a sinking, patient sufferer, has found cause to bless the inventions which minister to sensations too exquisitely excited, and to what may be termed the accumulated horrors of the sick-bed and the sick-room, as they existed scarcely half a century ago; but

in spite of this, the unnatural demand upon strength had been made too long for even the perfect relief Angela now enjoyed to insure immediate recovery, and it was weeks before the tender care and generous hospitality of Miss Grant could restore the strength which over-exertion had exhausted.

Complaints of this description, arising from exhaustion of power, are so wearying—require so much time, so much endurance and fortitude upon the part of the sufferers—so much tenderness and indulgence upon that of their nurses, that no disorder more heavily taxes the patience and affections of friends.

But both did their part in this instance. Angela spared not any of those virtuous efforts with herself which in such cases are indispensable to a cure, and Joan none of those innumerable assistances and alleviations which tend so greatly to abridge the period of suffering. Still these nervous disorders are tiresome, wearying things; and woe to those careless and indifferent ones, who, by their negligence, their hard-heartedness, or their unjustifiable exactions of strength, cause them insensibly to fasten upon those dependent upon them!

Easily arrested in their first symptoms, nothing can be more tedious and discouraging than such disorders, when once they have become fixed; and the worst of it is, that while the utter helplessness of those thus afflicted makes them miserably dependent upon the tenderness and consideration of every creature around them, there is no class of diseases which so little commands the sympathy of mankind.

Every one agrees that the suffering is dreadful, far exceeding that of severe bodily pain, and yet in almost every case that occurs there is less care, less attention, less sedulous endeavor to relieve the sufferer, than in any other with which I am acquainted.

That there is no immediate danger to life may be one cause of this indifference. The imagination is enlisted in the cause of danger—of death—while the still more serious apprehension of a continued existence of misery is in comparison disregarded.

Partly, perhaps, this indifference arises from the persuasion that the patient ought and can do much for himself; and this is most certainly the fact: but then it is, on the other hand, equally a fact, that he can do absolutely nothing, unless he be assisted by others. There is not a more miserable case of dependence existing than that of the nervous patient.

Painfully affected by slight inconveniences, which to the healthy man are not even perceptible, his sensations excited to that preternatural acuteness which renders those senses, intended only to con-

vey wholesome impressions, the source of perpetual pain; he finds the common stir of life, the mere noise and bustle of ordinary existence, an insupportable source of suffering, and not only of suffering, but of positive injury, by increasing the irritation of the nerve whence all the mischief arises. He is miserably dependent upon the consideration of every body, and at all times; for to him the ticking of the clock, the church bell, the footsteps on the stair, even the birds in the trees, may prove a source of misery, and the very grasshopper a burden!

To be a martyr to all these capricious sensations, and to have to plead for mercy to those to whom those very pleadings appear the excess of extravagance, of caprice, and self-will—what a fate! And, worst of all, to know that all the comforts, and luxuries, and indulgences of life, which every body is wanting for themselves, and wishing for, if they could get them!—such as traveling without fatigue—cheerful scenes—entertaining books—delicate food—delicate lodging—quiet—abstinence from all exertion—amusement, every thing which a person is ashamed to ask for, afford the only chance of recovery—to know all this, to feel how hateful the patient becomes through that apparent selfishness, bred of the very necessities of his illness—how still more hateful he must become by exacting and demanding those indulgences, if withheld; and yet that the only chance of his restoration to the common life and sympathy of mankind must arise from such assistance being granted!

The poor heart, wounded by little careless acts of unkindness, probably never intended, but acting with exaggerated force upon sensations so tremblingly alive, struggling against all these mental sorrows, while the frame is shaking, and trembling, and sinking. And sleep, which offers even to the victim on the rack of pain its sweet restoring intervals of heavenly repose, forsakes the poor exhausted one!

What an accumulation of sufferings! They are faintly and imperfectly described here; but Angela would have had to endure them all in their extremest severity—for nothing equals their severity in cases where these maladies proceed from exhaustion, *les vapeurs d'épuisement*—had she not had the infinite happiness of falling into the hands of such a one as Joan Grant.

That true friend, that wise counselor, that firm and tender minister to want and suffering!

Neither was there, as I have said, upon her own part any want of that virtuous self-government, those determined exertions, without which the ministry of the kindest and wisest will be found ineffectual.

Together they triumphed over this terrible attack, and the rescue of this young creature from a long state of hapless incapacity was added to Joan Grant's deeds of mercy for this year. By the time Miss Darby arrived in England, Angela was quite ready to be presented to her.

They met first at Miss Grant's house, in New Norfolk street, where Augusta came the morning after her arrival in town.

She had been acquainted with Miss Grant from a child, and was very much attached to her.

Angela was sitting with her friend in the usual morning-room, employed in arranging some papers for her, while Joan, as usual, was busy at her writing, when—

"Miss Darby," said the footman, opening the door; and Miss Darby entered the room.

She was a fine, tall, fashionable-looking girl, dressed in a very striking and becoming manner, though something differently from the mode which then reigned in England. She looked to great advantage, as people usually do who appear in the last newly rising fashion from Paris, before it has fully risen upon London.

"How do you do, dear Joan? Busy as ever? What a *bureau de bienveillance* you do keep up here! It makes one ashamed of one's own idleness. Well, how do you do? You look very well, however. And dearest, best of all earthly M'Dougals—not one day older than when I left—how glad I am to see you both again!"

"Dear Augusta," said Joan, shaking hands with her, or rather receiving from her hand a most hearty shake, "I am glad to see you looking so well; I never saw you looking better."

"Am I looking well?" said she, turning carelessly to a glass. "I protest I can scarcely believe you. If you knew my history . . . I'll tell it you sometime, but never mind now."

"Miss Nevil"—"Miss Darby," said Joan presenting them.

"Are you to be my new governess?" began Augusta, answering Angela's salute with one very cordial, but with the slightest possible dash of *hauteur* in it. "I protest I think you a vast deal too pretty. Why, you darling, simple-hearted Joan! how could you think I could endure to enlist under my banners a creature so much prettier than myself?"

"Come, come," said Mr. M'Dougal from his seat at the fire, "no false modesty, if you please; Miss Nevil has only to look in the glass to assure herself that all this is nonsense."

"I am very content to let it be so," said Miss Darby, carelessly turning again to Angela, "for I like your looks very much; and you

ought, by his account, to like mine still better. So, I conclude, it is settled so. And now, Joan, sit down again, and throw away that everlasting pen, and let us talk together of Palermo."

"It is a lovely spot, I believe; and you had some friends there—so you must have enjoyed it much."

"No; there was nobody there I cared for, except the Missendens—and I don't know whether I cared for them or not, and I am sure I don't know why I should."

Joan looked at her with an expression partly of anxiety, partly of wonder.

"How is Lord Missenden?"

"Oh, he's better. He'll live, poor creature! He'll cumber the ground a little longer. And I don't see why he shouldn't, for he stands in nobody's way, because there is nobody coming after him."

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. M'Dougal. "A young lady, and forget Mr. Vavasour!"

"Mr. Vavasour forgets himself," said she. "It's really too provoking, Joan Grant. It would drive you and that virtuous M'Dougal mad if you could see it—how he's idling his existence away, doing nothing upon earth but draw, draw! As if a man's life were given him to draw!"

"You are joking, I hope. It is ten thousand pities to see such a man as that forgetting all the claims of his fortune and station in the mere pursuit of an art, however beautiful," said Mr. M'Dougal.

"Fortune! not much of that, poor fellow! I believe. That's been eat up at *faro* ages ago."

"You don't mean to say Mr. Vavasour games!" cried Joan.

"He, poor soul! He hasn't the spirit for it! No; he does nothing but sketch, and lie upon the rocks, and look at the sea, and heave sighs like Mount Etna—such sighs! It was his father I was thinking of. You know he's just the emptiest head in the world. If you put peas into it, they would rattle as if they were in a bladder. He never had two ideas beyond the dice-box. Well, he's made a pretty mess of it, they say!"

"That's a shocking thing!" said Mr. M'Dougal; "but good comes out of evil. This may force Mr. Vavasour out of his indolent indifference; he will be obliged to use his abilities, if he have nothing else to depend upon, which will be well for himself and for his country."

"His country! Much he cares for *that*. It's *the* country the gentle Werther is raving after. It's the strangest misanthrope you

ever saw; only it's not man in the abstract he hates, but man in society. You never saw such a bear, one should call him, only he's so excessively handsome and elegant. No; he seems sublimely indifferent to every thing. Lady Missenden is miserable about it, and quite cries when she thinks of it; but she may thank herself—she made such a fuss about him. He could never do wrong—and now, as she says, after all the sacrifices made to his education, he seems as if he would never go right! All he appeared to want was to get back to England, and yet there seems nothing he means to do when he gets there. So like a child! Never satisfied where he is—such a restless desire of mere change: but no wonder one so idle finds every thing and every place horribly dull. However, we saw the poor old lord, and his wife and son, and Tom Levet—Oh, do you know, Miss Grant, he's actually picked up Tom Levet for his valet, and he's made him as sober as a judge! Tom's quite a reformed character. I forgot to enumerate *that* as the result of Mr. Vavasour's Sicilian year. Well, we saw them all shipped, and then we started ourselves. They'll be home, too, in about a month or so. Miss Nevil, I hope you like the country?"

"Yes I do, very much indeed."

"A liking of one used to it? for if you are not used to it, you can have no idea how horribly dull it is. And Cambridgeshire of all places! Were you ever in Cambridgeshire?"

"No, never; but I suppose I can make myself as happy there as I have done in other parts of the world. I care for nothing except living in a close street in town; that is the only existence, in my eyes, almost worse than none."

"Oh, but Cambridgeshire is horrid! No trees, no hedges, no copses, no brooks, no nothing but wheat and bean-fields. No neighbors, either, near us—but I don't care for that, for if there is a thing that I detest it's country neighbors. But do you know that you are to teach me to draw? I am going to learn to draw, to rival the incomparable Vavasour in strenuous idleness. Miss Grant, what *are* all these dreadful-looking tracts about? I hope you don't write and read tracts?" Turning again to Angela, "It's the only thing about Joan Grant that I don't like; but the association of a woman with tracts is to me insupportable. Are you teetotalizing as usual, Joan?"

"Yes, my dear; or something very much like it."

"I think, Mr. M'Dougal, if it had not been for Joan's passion for tracts, she would have been one of the most charming women in existence, and she would have been married ten times over: but

what man on earth could fancy a woman with a bundle of tracts in her hand?"

Joan colored slightly.

"I confess it's the proper calling for an old maid," said she.

"Miss Augusta," put in Mr. M'Dougal, "in the mean time, will be benefiting mankind by her drawings."

"How I do hate all those phrases!" said she, tossing her handsome head. "I can not suspect either of you of cant, but you don't keep upon the windy side of it enough; and I am quite positive numbers and numbers, loads and loads of people, laugh at and ridicule, and almost hate Miss Grant, because of her being so busy about doing good. They don't know you, Joan, or they could not hate you; but there is such a feeling about the thing."

"I wonder to hear Augusta Darby, who professes to despise public opinion, as the most contemptible, blundering nonsense, declaiming in this way," said Joan, quietly. "It is really very hard upon me, that you will not allow poor me the privilege you claim for yourself. I thought you had set all the *on dits* at defiance."

"I shouldn't mind in the least if they'd talk of you as they do of me—blaming me for this and that, declaiming against me for this piece of nonsense and extravagance or another—for while they blame me they envy me and admire me in their hearts, the dear creatures, I know. But it's not so with you, Joan: they positively do dislike—and, what is worse, in secret despise you, for being so good; and, most of all, for these horrid tracts. And now, do you really think all this stuff does do any body the least good in the world?"

"Yes, my dear, I am simple enough to believe that this stuff, as you call it, does a great deal of good to a great many people in the world. But what makes you look so pale and weary, my dear Angela? Are you tired? Is the room too close for you?" said Joan, coming up to her with her usual kind solicitude.

"Oh, nothing, nothing," said Angela; but her countenance had fallen.

In spite of the courage she had summoned up, in spite of the apparent ease with which she had answered Miss Darby, her poor heart was sinking with disappointment.

Vavasour was the name of Tom Levet's master, and he was the son of a peer. It was impossible—she had long taught herself to think it impossible—that he and Mr. Carteret should be one; and yet the description Miss Darby gave of her admirer, lover, or whatever one may venture to call the man to whom she thought herself in this equivocal manner engaged, was so like in many respects.

If it did no longer excite hope by the idea that her lover was alive and might be restored to her, it summoned up the most melancholy recollections; recalling those delightful days they had passed together—those drawing-lessons, which were to prove with them not a preparation for the idle employment of a few superfluous hours, but the serious business of life, the providing means of subsistence for themselves and others.

But she roused herself from the painful reverie into which she was falling, and, shaking off these dreary recollections, returned to the business of the present, and, lifting up to her friend and protector as serene and unclouded a countenance as she could command, she said—

“Have you been so very kind as to prepare Miss Darby for taking a young lady with an encumbrance into her family? You know how much Mrs. Usherwood objected to it, and I am sure she will not have expected such a girl as I am should be burdened with any thing of this sort.”

“An encumbrance, my dear creature!” cried Augusta, opening both her eyes. “La! I hope you haven’t got a horrid husband in a corner, as you professional young ladies, especially when they are very pretty—as in this case—usually have? That would be a damper, I must confess; those professional husbands are often such wretches.”

“No,” said Angela, smiling; “not quite so bad as that. But there are three little children.”

“Why, you can’t be a widow?”

“Brothers and sister.”

“Oh, dear! that’s, perhaps, not what mamma will just altogether like. But Donnington is a pretty large house—if we must find an out-of-the-way corner for them, we must.”

“My dear Augusta,” said Miss Grant, “you can not seriously suppose, in spite of my tracts and so on, that I was actually proposing to burden you with the two little brothers and sister of Angela Nevil? All that is desired is, that she may be allowed to place them near her, and to visit them and look after them, from time to time.”

“Heaven bless me! why who could be so unreasonable as to object to it?”

“Some have been found so—and almost to quarrel with Miss Nevil for her generous determination never to forsake them.”

“Why, to be sure, you never would forsake them! for they must be poor little orphans, as I know you are one yourself. But I hope you have managed to make guardians or something give you enough to maintain them—for how can you possibly do that?”

"I am afraid I must try," said Angela, in almost a deprecating tone—Mrs. Usherwood's ideas upon the subject had taught her in this respect to be distrustful—"but I hope you will not object. I am a very good manager, young as I am," said she, "and so fond of dress that I shall contrive to appear as I ought to do, and to have plenty for them, out of the very handsome salary you have been so good as to promise me."

Augusta made no reply: she turned abruptly to the window, and seemed lost in thought.

She stood some time drumming with her hand upon the panes, then she came suddenly back to the table and said, bluntly—

"And with one miserable hundred pounds you mean to dress yourself and maintain three little children?—quite impossible! utterly impossible!"

"Pray do not say so—pray do not think so!" said Angela, fixing her almost imploring eyes, into which the tears were fast rising, upon her face; "indeed, I can do it quite easily. I will not—they shall not be the least burden upon you."

"Burden upon *me*!—And I, who spend between two and three hundred a-year upon my dress alone, and who never have thought what others did, or how others were living! I! a strong, bouncing, healthy girl, wasting every hour of my life in pleasure, and spending every pound of my income in the vainest indulgences! And you! so delicate—so slender—so fragile—so young! Oh, Joan Grant! oh, good Mr. M'Dougal! what a contrast! But why didn't you tell me at once, Joan?" she went on; "it wasn't like you—indeed, it was not! Why did you not ask for two hundred—three hundred? you should have had it."

"Because one hundred was a very handsome sum for your guardians to pay," replied Joan; "and because Angela thinks—and she thinks rightly—that her necessities afford no claim to impose upon the liberality of others. One hundred a-year is a very handsome salary for one so young to obtain. But we have talked the matter over, and the abundance of time which she will have at her command while with you will enable her to use her pencil to her own advantage; and I have promised to endeavor to dispose of her drawings. I hope by this means she will be able to accumulate a little fund against the time when the education of her brother must begin. So you see I am not nearly so uncalculating as you think, Augusta."

Augusta stood again silent for a little time.

Then she went up to Angela, and taking her hand, said—

"I will do every thing that lies in my power to make you happy

and comfortable. I have a hot, unmanageable, undisciplined temper, I know; I am a haughty, self-willed, violent creature. You will have a vast, vast deal to forgive in me, every day in my life—but I will try never to forget what you are, and what I am. And I don't behave so very, very badly to those I honor and esteem: do I, Joan Grant?—do I, Mr. M'Dougal?"

Mr. M'Dougal's eyes were glistening as he looked at her. And Angela turned toward her a countenance bright and glowing with a pleasure that for months—I might almost say years—she had never felt.

The delight to her young, girlish heart, to find such a warm heart ready to respond to hers—to obtain a friend of her own age, where she had only hoped to find a patroness and a protector—perhaps only something in the shape of one of the Miss Usherwoods, the only young ladies with whom her limited experience had suffered her to become acquainted.

Her heart almost danced with delight at this prospect.

A young girl is so happy in a young girl's friendship—and she was so certain she had found a friend.

"And as for these little children," Miss Darby went on, "I know the very thing for them. There's a remarkably pretty lodge at the east gate—lodges are usually ugly, or very inconvenient pretenses to fine things, but this is quite an exception. It's the very one that foolish old nurse of ours once lived in, that was such a goose as to marry Tom Levet, and it was made really comfortable by mamma on purpose for her; and your children, dear Angela—do let me call you Angela at once—shall have it (I suppose you have got a nurse with them): and there they will have a little garden, and chicken pens, and rabbit pens, and all that nonsense which children and old women are so fond of—and you can run down and see them twenty times a-day if you like. Won't that do, Miss Grant?"

"My dearest Augusta!" said Joan, and she took her hand and pressed it—and said no more.

While Augusta turned her face, full of unaffected pleasure toward her, she read that approbation of which she was so proud in Joan Grant's eye, and answered it by the throbbing of her own warm heart.

"And now," she said, "that's all settled. And when can you come away? for I believe mamma means to leave town early in next week."

"Oh, I shall be quite ready," said Angela. "You are so very, very good, I can not thank you as I ought to do. You do not know—you can not guess—how happy you make me."

“Well, we’ll bundle up all your little baggage, and it shall follow as soon as possible. We shall have to whitewash, and paint, and paper, and glaze, to get ready for them; but we shall be very busy, and have soon done. Did you ever paper a room?—I have. We shall find it charming work providing for our young family.”

Angela’s smiles were now almost as bright as her own.

“But I shall be dying to see the children—where are they?”

“They are living in a very obscure street in a dull part of this great town, poor little things.”

“I hope they’re pretty—I do so hate ugly children,” said Augusta, thoughtlessly: “they are such horrid things! Don’t you think so? Well, to-morrow I shall come down in the carriage early, and we’ll go and see them together. Now I must go out in the Park with mamma.”

And away she went.

“I should so like—I should so like” hesitated Angela.

“What should you like, my dear?”

“If it were possible, if I could contrive it, just to get down to — street, and tell Nurse who is coming to see the children, that she might put on them their best frocks, poor little things, and make them look as nice as they could before Miss Darby sees them. They are so pretty when they are made nice! but children look so badly all in the rough, little dears.”

“That you shall by all means do, my dear girl,” said Joan. “I will take you down this afternoon myself. They are, fortunately, remarkably pretty, interesting children, and will quite complete the conquest you have begun over Miss Darby’s heart.”

“She’s a fine warm-hearted creature!” said Mr. M’Dougal. “I had a suspicion that there was much more good in her than she let appear.”

“And I already see the beginning of all the good I anticipated for her in a friendship with my Angela,” said Miss Grant. “Her character is more susceptible of right impressions than that of any one I almost ever knew; unluckily, it has not been her good fortune to be subjected often to such. You will see she will take almost as much pleasure in these children as you do yourself, Angela.”

“I did not think I could ever be so very happy, dear, dear Miss Grant!”

But you will imagine, and it would be tedious for me to enlarge upon her gratitude or her happiness.

CHAPTER XXXV.

But come, thou goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth.

EARLY the next morning—that is, early for so fine a lady as she was—Miss Darby, in a light, elegant carriage of her own, arrived at Miss Grant's door.

She ran lightly up stairs, opened the door of the sitting-room herself, and, without being announced, came in.

Mr. M'Dougal and Angela were there alone.

"Here I am, my dear Miss Nevil. Are you ready equipped to go and see our children?—*our* children that are henceforward to be? I am quite impatient to become acquainted with them. I like children, particularly little boys—they are such droll little rebels."

"Miss Darby looks handsomer than ever this morning," said Mr. M'Dougal, who was sitting, as usual, in his arm-chair by the fire, his hands upon his knees watching with his still shrewd eye, what was going on, and gazing with an expression of great admiration and pleasure at her very handsome face, now full of that cheerful good humor which results from a really warm and generous heart when engaged in a kind action. I hope she will not run away without shaking hands with me."

"No, to be sure!" cried she, running up to him. "But make haste, for I am upon a new hobby; and then, you know of old, nothing can stop me. Come, Angela, are you quite ready?"

"In a moment," said Angela, who was engaged in copying a paper for Miss Grant. "I have only a few more lines to finish, if you will have the goodness to wait for me."

"Joan Grant! Where is Joan Grant to-day?" said Augusta. "She would let you off, I'm sure; and I am in such a fidget to be gone."

"I am so sorry," said Angela, whose fingers, too, were twitching with impatience; "but I would not—I could not—leave any thing undone that could be of service to Miss Grant, you know."

"To be sure not! We none of us could bear to show the least particle of indifference to the least shadow of a behest from Joan

Grant; so write away. I am quite as bad, or quite as good, as she is, Mr. M'Dougal, about Joan Grant," said she, going up to the fire again. "Now, I wonder what that woman's gone out about, at this hour of the day?"

"Perhaps about an errand of kindness," said Mr. M'Dougal, smiling upon her, "like some very fashionable young ladies of my acquaintance."

"I wish the fashionable young ladies of your acquaintance may not have more whim than love in their good deeds," said Augusta, candidly; and looking down at Mr. M'Dougal, as there he sat, with much affection and esteem in his countenance, she said, "This room is positively infectious; I should grow as good and loving as any of you, if I often came here."

"Well, the oftener you come in here the better, then; for you make every body loving you come near," said he.

"Oh, flatterer! false flatterer!" she answered, and with a slight sigh. "O that I could oblige you to make your words good!" and, turning from him, she returned to Angela, who had now finished the paper she had been employed upon, had folded it, and laid it upon the table, and was standing up ready to depart.

"Now for the brats," said Augusta. "Come along!"

"Do you know," said Miss Darby, gayly, turning to her companion, as soon as, seated in the carriage, they had driven off, "I think nothing on earth was ever so pleasant as we are going to be. I like you so much, I quite long to begin. Two girls of our age, both so clever and handsome as we are—for it's no use pretending to false humility when we are alone—both inclined to be pleased with each other; one so good and the other so naughty; one so civilized and the other so wild; one who has known so much sorrow and the other," (a slight cloud passing over her face,) "who perhaps has but just begun to taste it—but who has, till now, led such a joyous, careless life.—We are going to be real friends, are we not?" and she took Angela's hand.

Angela could only answer by a smile, but such a smile! It spoke so much happiness, so much gratitude, so much love already.

Yes, already her heart—it was a very young heart, you remember—gave itself up to friendship, as it had done to love, in all the undoubting confidence of generous youth. She had loved and honored Joan Grant, but as it was a protector, as a parent almost, to be looked up to and revered; she loved her as one loves a mother, a guardian—but here was one of her own age, one she could love with all the delightful, careless ease of sisterhood. It seemed almost as

if the clouds that had darkened her life were about to be all dissipated.

The difference of conditions which mars so many an incipient friendship seemed here done away, partly by the freshness, warmth, and carelessness of Miss Darby's manner; partly by the consciousness of superior ability upon her own part. Yes, clever and animated as was Augusta, and in spite of the sort of force of character which displayed itself in all she said and did, Angela had that secret consciousness of real superiority, both in courage and genius, which equalizes conditions, in cases such as this.

She felt that her friendship might prove as valuable to Augusta as Augusta's could be to her. She was far, indeed, from arrogance or conceit; but she knew the strength and value of her own heart, and she knew that a true friend, such as she should prove, was in every condition of life a treasure of rare price.

Therefore she had, from the first, felt a something within that balanced all Miss Darby's more evident advantages, and restored that equilibrium which must be adjusted some way or other before there can be any very real enjoyment of the social affections.

The love she already felt for Augusta was not only sweet in itself, but seemed to raise her to the proper level in her own eyes.

"I never saw such a face as yours is, Angela!" Augusta ran on; "its whole history is in itself. You do not rattle away as I do, I see; it does not seem your nature; but no matter, your eyes supply the deficiencies of your tongue."

"When I feel very happy, and a great many other feelings which are more than that, it seems to me vain to try to put them into words; that is one reason," said Angela.

"I hope, however, with all your prudence, and that discretion above your years, which dear Joan Grant wrote such a long chapter about to mamma, that you can fall in love at first sight—in friendship as well as in love, I mean: *I can.*"

"I did not know that I could before, but now I do," was Angela's answer.

"I thought I should not *much* like you, after Joan's letter. You know, dearest darling, Joan is so *very* wise, that it's almost formal sometimes; I ought not to say 'formal.' Dear Angela, don't look grave: formal means dealing in forms, which she never, never did: but she keeps one *in* the forms; that's what I mean. She has such strict rules of right, has that dear woman. Not the least bit of a white lie; not the least bit of a backbite—backbites are such dear, stinging things! Nothing ill-natured, nothing the least unjust, will

that woman tolerate. She leaves the salt and pepper out of the pie, I sometimes think, and that's the reason, I have ever thought, that the men wouldn't have her."

"There is another salt of life," thought Angela; but she could not express her ideas in the light, pointed way which would alone, she thought, suit the occasion; and any thing in the least approaching to formal morality from her young lips would, she knew, do Augusta much more harm than good. She only said—

"I don't know how Miss Grant cooks her pie, but I found the taste of it very pleasant."

"You don't ask me about the man that wouldn't have her," said Augusta, looking into her face. "I thought I had caught you there. Now, I'll be whipped if you are not dying of curiosity, only you think it wouldn't be proper and governess like to confess it. You thought Joan Grant could never have had a love affair; nor I either, I dare say—you young nineteens are so innocent—because very likely *you* never had. Oh, you color! and oh, you turn away your face! Nay, nay, is it so? We will not talk of our own love affairs"—and Augusta sighed again—"better not. And yet, perhaps, there might be a sympathy between us there, too," said she, dropping her voice; "but no, no," seeing Angela look distressed, "don't be afraid of me, I will not pump you—I would not pain you on that subject for the universe! I used to make such a joke of it—I know better now. Come, where was I? I was telling you about Joan Grant."

"Perhaps more than Joan Grant would like I should know," said Angela.

"Oh, nonsense! all the world knows it! It's strange how things get out! it's horrid how things get out!" said Augusta bitterly; "how the most mortifying, the most painful, the most provoking, secret histories get out! things one would rather die than have known. Yes," she went on rapidly, "Joan Grant loved a man who didn't love her. I dare say it's the case in half the love-stories in the world—men are so hard, so indifferent, so heartless! Was it your case? Do forgive me!"

"No," said Angela; "he is dead."

"Dead!" said Augusta, seizing her hand again. "You have wept for him—you are ready to weep for him again—you think yourself, or have thought yourself, the most miserable creature, in the agony of your despair. Now haven't you? Oh! you do not know—you can not guess what you have been spared! But what am I talking about?—Joan Grant. It was a long time before she got over it—some say she has never got over it. It's that has made her

so good ; but then she was very good when this stroke fell upon her. Misfortune turns some into angels ; others into fiends. It just depends on how they are when it comes upon them ; it's like death, it leaves them as it finds them."

"No, I hope not, and I believe not ; I should be sorry to think that any one could be the worse for sorrow. Sorrow is such a sacred, holy, I could almost say, strengthening thing," said Angela.

"Yes, yes, as I said, to those who are good before, as you were. I've heard what a noble, brave girl you were, but I didn't know your heart was in mourning while you were struggling as you did, or I should have honored you still more—honored you, well I might, for if *my* heart were shipwrecked I know how it would be with me."

"As it ought to be—as it must be—as it should be," said Angela, earnestly.

"Neither as it ought nor as it should, but as it *must* be," was the reply. "I dare say you do not believe in a thousand dreadful things which the knowledge of my own heart and other people's hearts has taught me to believe in. You blessed ones, who seem to be sent into this world under the guardianship of the holy angels, you don't know what it is to have the fiend tugging at you."

Angela turned her eyes upon the impassioned speaker with a look of sad surprise. The face of Augusta was like a beautiful sky, the bright splendor of which is being all suddenly darkened over by lurid clouds, driving here and there before the angry winds.

There was a sudden blackness, as of despair, in her eyes ; then she threw herself back in the carriage, closed her eyelids for a few seconds, and opening them again, laughed and said—

"Did you ever read 'Christabel ?' "

"Yes," said Angela, "often."

"Don't take me for the lady with the serpent eye ; don't shudder at me, as Christabel did at that horrid, unaccountable being ! If I thought I should do you any harm by coming near you, you bright and good one, believe me I would rather die. So don't think about Christabel."

"My dear Miss Darby !" laying her hand affectionately upon hers.

"Promise me you won't, that's all. There's a pretty French verse—'*Je ne suis pas la rose, mais j'ai vecu près d'elle*'—keep that in your head, sweet Angela, and be as the rose to me. And now, shall I tell you more about Joan Grant ?"

"If I have any right to hear."

"Oh, you dear scrupulous creature! I tell you, poor thing, all the world knows *her* story. And was it not a miserable aggravation? Poor thing, she had the greatest fool of a mother that ever was born, and she went prattling all the world over about it! I never saw the man—he was the handsomest creature in the universe, they say; and so clever! He went to the bar, and now he's a judge in India. Years and years since they parted, and they have never once met again. But the magnet vibrates to the pole, though thousands of miles away from it; and heart points to heart, depend upon it, Angela. And that heart of hers has never deviated: and it's that I *do* love her dearly for, because, with all her tracts, and abolitions, and teetotalisms, and nonsense, which I do hate so, there's a true woman's heart under all. It's so odd—such a contrast—all that tiresome, mannish sort of business outside, and to think there's a true-love heart behind it all! I do love her for that—it makes one pardon all the rest."

"Pardon all the rest! Why, who can help honoring her and loving her, almost adoring her, for every bit of the rest?" said Angela, with unfeigned astonishment; but then, recollecting herself, she added, "I believe one must have known what it is to want and suffer, before one can justly value those who go about relieving want and suffering."

Augusta seemed struck with these few words.

There was a pause; then she said—

"When we are better acquainted, you shall tell me about want and suffering. Prosperity has made my heart hard—I want experience of these things."

"Look out," said Angela.

"Why, what a horrid, detestable part of the town we are coming into! Surely the man can't be driving right. I never saw such squalid misery—such filthy streets—such abominable houses! None that deserve the name of human beings can live here!"

"Yes, but they do, for here lives your old Nurse, Mrs. Levet, and here my poor little brothers and sister are imprisoned."

"Levet live here! What could have brought *her* here?"

"Necessity and drunkenness!"

"And what could have brought you here?"

"Necessity, without drunkenness."

Augusta looked very grave, and, as the carriage drove up the wretched street, kept her eyes fixed upon the different groups, watching the varied aspects under which want and vice present themselves in such places.

At last, rallying her spirits, and turning to Angela—

“What tricks the imagination plays us! When I heard you were living with Levet, who I remember so neat and trim at Donnington, and her house and garden quite a miniature paradise, I fancied you in some smart house, with a vine between the windows,” said she, laughing. “I was so silly, I thought these horrid places, whenever I have happened to pass through them, could be only the haunts of beggars and thieves—‘decent poverty,’ as I have heard it called. Oh, I never thought it could come to this!”

“In large towns it does,” said Angela; “house-rent, light, water, the very air one breathes, is so very dear.”

“Then why on earth did you—does any one—come into large towns?”

“You forget I had—they have—to get their livings.”

“Well, till this moment I always thought that I should rather like to have to get my living. I fancied it must be so entertaining; I never thought it could be a hardship, as I do now.”

“So I thought,” said Angela; “but people who have not their livings to get should beware of such ideas, lest they grow hard-hearted. I do not mean that to get one’s living is a *hardship*, that would be very wrong to say—but it is a difficulty.”

“An immense, an enormous, an insupportable difficulty! But the carriage stops; this must be the house: let us get to these blessed children! I long to get them out of such a hideous place as this!”

“One of Joan Grant’s objects is to get every body out of such hideous places,” said Angela, simply.

“Well, well, a few more of your lessons, and I shall write tracts myself. But here we stop at the door, and there is, if I can believe my eyes, poor Levet herself. But what a pale, lean, dirty draggle-tail figure she is!”

“Levet!” as she entered the little shop.

“Miss Darby!” with a scream of joy.

And she was running to embrace her; but suddenly recollecting herself, she cast a hasty glance at her dirty hands and dress, and, falling back, colored, courtesied, and said—“I am sure you are very good, ma’am, to come to my poor place.”

“Poor place! why, it’s a perfect doghole, Levet! Shop! do you call this wretche ddungeon a shop? Why, what on earth, Levet, can have brought you to this?”

“Don’t ask me, Miss Darby—pray don’t!” casting an appealing

look at Angela. "Not my fault, indeed, except for marrying Tom; and who could have helped that?"

"Tom! why what on earth could induce you to marry Tom, my good, soft, silly Levet? But I heard of it, and from that day to this I've never forgiven you. Tom Levet, of all creatures upon earth! Well, well, never mind—he's grown as good as gold now!"

"So he tells me," said Mrs. Levet, cheering up.

"I can give you better evidence than his own for that," Augusta went on; "for Master Tom was never famous for a superstitious regard to truth: but he is grown steady—no thanks to him for it—but he's got an excellent master in Mr. Vavasour."

"He'd be quite one after yours and Joan Grant's heart," she added, turning to Angela, "as far as his masterhood goes, whatever his other freaks!"

"Oh, Tom tells me he is such a charming young gentleman!" said Mrs. Levet.

"Does he?" said Augusta, sitting down, as if quite forgetting her errand to the children. "What does Tom say of him?"

"That he's so handsome, and so clever, and makes such beautiful pictures, and that every body loves him; but (poor young man!) he doesn't much care for any body. He pines a good deal to himself, Tom thinks; and (poor fellow!) he fancies he's crossed in love."

"What a bear I am to keep you waiting, Angela!" cried Augusta, starting up, as if she were stung. "Where are these blessed children?"

Their gladsome voices might be heard at the top of the stairs, calling "Angy, Angy!" but Nurse would not let them come down.

"Well, these are pretty little loves, Angela!"

They were sitting down in the close den of a room, Angela with the baby, now above a year old—Augusta with the two others in her lap. She had soon made friends with both.

Augusta was one of those bright countenances which all children love.

"I might have let my imagination trot, as regards these children. Why, they are as sweet, and as clean, and as nice, as if they lived in Grosvenor Square! How *do* you contrive it, Mrs. Nurse? Why, who would care for any thing, if they could always be so nice? I'm sure I've seen children in grand nurseries not in half such good order."

"Keep outside the curtain, if you please," said Angela, smiling

gayly: "I am not going to initiate you all at once into the horrors of the prison-house. All poor children look particularly nice when they are dressed for company—for company comes seldom to him 'who is a stranger even unto his brother.' But I am delighted you think them so pretty—I think them so very pretty myself! But then, they are my own, you knew!"

"And mine too!—I cry booty! Why, the babes in the wood were never prettier than this little boy and girl! One can't look at them without thinking of robin-redbreasts and strawberry leaves. But, you little creatures, what waxy hands and what pale cheeks you have! Where did they get those, Mrs. Nurse?"

"They are delicate little creatures, madam, by nature, and we are obliged to live in too close a place," said Nurse. "Poor little lambs! one forgets how peaking they look till it strikes a stranger."

Angela looked at her little ones anxiously, and then at Augusta, with a love and gratitude not to be expressed by words, who said—

"Well, Mrs. Nurse, that's all over now: Miss Nevil and I leave town in a day or two—she's going down with me to Donnington."

"Donnington!—bless me!" said Nurse, courtesying; "may I be so bold—are you Miss Darby, madam?"

"Neither more nor less; "but what do you know of Miss Darby?"

"Only through Sarah Levet, madam; she's an old friend of mine, madam."

"Is she? Did you ever see her cottage at Donnington?"

"Have I, ma'am? Oh, what a real paradise of a place it was! And to think of her leaving it for Tom Levet!"

"I am glad you like it. Don't you think that you and the little ones could find room enough in it? You know there are two bedrooms up stairs, and it's not so *very* small: what do you think, Mrs. Nurse?"

"Think!—think!"—clasping her hands—"think! Why, Miss Darby, that you are an angel, come just in time to save these poor darlings' lives. I wouldn't say any thing—I knew it was no use, and she, my master's eldest daughter, slaving herself to death for us all; but I knew how it must end: these little creatures, born of such delicate parents as my poor master and mistress were, can't bear with it—they can not. It's no use talking: they will droop and die. Why, Miss Angela, who'd think Master Tommy — why, he's but the merest shadow of what he used to be!"

"Too true, Nurse," said Angela; "but where there was no remedy, I dared not think of it."

"Well, we may all talk of it and think of it now," said Augusta, "for we're going down in three days, and we shall paste, and paper, and paint, and be all ready for you in a week or two; so pack up your alls, Mrs. Nurse, and be ready too. And now, little ones, put on your hats and bonnets: you don't mind being crowded, Angela, and I'm sure I don't; and let us take them into the Park for a drive. I am sorry there's not room for Mrs. Nurse, or we would take the baby; he looks paler than any of them."

"May I carry him on my lap?" said Angela. "Poor little fellow, it would do him such a world of good?"

"Why, yes, if it won't tire you."

"Tire me!—oh, it won't tire *me*!"—casting upon her another of those grateful, loving looks, that went straight to Augusta's heart.

"And I have not done one single thing for herself, after all!" thought Augusta. "Only for these children!"

"Come, little baggages, get ready!—we'll blow them about famously, Angela!"

You have all of you hearts.

I need not describe what Angela felt, as, sitting side by side, both busy with the children—one not more engaged than the other—they drove into the pleasant Park.

Augusta seemed quite to have recovered her spirits, and was as gay and merry as ever; and Angela was happier than she had been for a very long time.

The happiness of the one arose from the consciousness that, could Vavasour see her now, he would no longer regard her with his usual indifference—that, for one who was so kind in his feelings, the pleasure she was now bestowing upon the unfortunate would not be without its value. True kindness of heart had prompted her actions, yet there was this delightful return upon herself; and to a person so governed by her imagination, the visionary future was almost as vivid as a reality.

Angela was singularly happy, because she was *very* happy; and she had not been happy for such a long time.

To sit and chat with Augusta, and hear her chat, was a great enjoyment; to have these poor little things inhaling the fresh air, and enjoying the gay sights they passed, with a pleasure known only to childhood, was perfect felicity.

They returned home by the Bazaar, into which Augusta insisted upon taking the children, while Angela remained in the carriage with baby. She returned with them, their little hands loaded with pres-

ents, and her own filled with rattles and every sort of noisy thing for the youngest.

And so they drove home in a Babel of discordant sounds; baby shaking his rattle, Tommy drumming his drum, Lucy making her little white pug-dog bark, till they were deafened. Augusta laughed aloud; and Angela, the only silent one, was the happiest of all.

They restored the children to Nurse, and then they returned to New Norfolk street, where Augusta, having fixed the day but one after the next for leaving town, shook hands heartily with her new friend, and departed better pleased with herself, and in more really good spirits, than she had known since Mr. Vavasour's arrival at Palermo.

"You look quite a different creature, my dear Angela!" said Joan Grant, as she entered the room, her pale cheek once more bright with the color of health, her eye sparkling, and her step elastic. "I hope you have had a pleasant morning."

The kindness she had received during her long illness from the hand of this admirable woman, had placed them, by this time, quite upon the most intimate and affectionate terms. It was as a young daughter goes up to a mother she loves, honors, and fears at once, that Angela ever approached her: she had no disguises for Joan; with her she felt assured of sympathy and protection in every difficulty. Still the difference of their age and circumstances rendered it impossible that Miss Grant could impart that gay sensation of ease and enjoyment which a few hours of Augusta's company had afforded.

Joan knew this well, and was far too just, too really benevolent, to feel any thing but pleasure in observing it.

Angela came and sat down by her at the writing-table, where she was busy, and said,—

"I am so excessively obliged to you. I like her so exceedingly. She has so much pity, so much generosity, and such a charming frankness of temper, I seem quite to love her already."

"I thought I did well for you, my love, when I placed you in her hands. Augusta has her faults, which Angela will find out in due time, and know how to overlook, in favor of as good and honest a heart as ever beat in a human bosom. But you know," said she, smiling, "you are to be the little governess—don't forget *that*—you are to counsel as a friend, while you love as a sister, remember."

"I shall do the last easily; but I am so young for the first. I counsel! Oh, no!"

"Yes, but you will, because you will soon find that it is due to

loyalty, truth, and honor, to say many a little thing, which if I did not feel sure you would have the strength of mind when the occasion required it to say, much as I love you, I would never have recommended you to Augusta Darby."

This seemed so strange to Angela; with the usual modesty of a fine mind, she had a very humble opinion of the extent of her own powers.

She compared herself with an idea of perfection formed by her imagination; and as her own performances fell so far short of this ideal, she never considered whether others did better or worse.

"Miss Darby!" said Angela, laughing; "she will be much more ready to counsel me than I her!"

"So you think now; but you are quite clever enough to find out what is wanting, without my taking upon myself the very ungracious part of pointing out Miss Darby's defects; which, after all, will interfere with her own happiness rather than yours, my dear, I hope. And now let me ring for your arrow-root, and go and lie down, for the excitement of this morning has made you look very bright; but that dear hand is trembling, nevertheless, like an aspen."

And Angela, at rest in spirit, sheltered by this kind being, like a child upon its mother's bosom, went up stairs to throw herself upon the bed, and once more in her life like a child, fall into a sweet and untroubled slumber.

And Joan took up the newspaper which she had been eagerly reading, but which she had laid down to talk with Angela.

It was a "Calcutta Gazette," and contained a speech which the Chief Justice had delivered at Bombay—a speech such as echoes from one hemisphere to the other, and awakens a sympathetic feeling throughout the world. Some great cause of humanity connected with our dealings with our multitudinous fellow-subjects in that eastern empire—some cause in which the rights of the defenseless were in question, had elicited it; and Joan, with swelling heart and humid eyes, had read and re-read every syllable.

It was not the universal admiration with which this rare expansion of eloquence had been received; it was the righteous heart which breathed in every line—the upright judge, and tender, benevolent man, thus displayed in every syllable, that sent the blood to her cheek, and cast a softness of untold joy over that usually serene but somewhat severe countenance.

But she had laid it down to welcome and to interest herself about Angela; and now she took it up and read it again and again.

Before entering upon the new scene of action, it seems proper to revert to that letter which Angela wrote to Mrs. Whitwell at the Great Ash Farm, by Miss Grant's advice, and inquire what came of it.

Nothing came of it.

In due course of time the letter was returned, with "Not to be found here," upon it. And in answer to another, written while she was living with Joan Grant, to inquire what had become of the last tenants, and whether there were any letters for her, an answer was returned, that the present holder of the farm knew nothing about them, and that no letters to her address were lying there.

This had scarcely been a disappointment, so little had she built upon it; but it was a satisfaction to find that all that could have been done was done.

And now, restored by Miss Grant's kindness and care, behold her upon a somewhat chilly, but sunny day, in the latter end of April, preparing to quit London and set out for Donnington, the seat of Mr. Darby.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Oh, come with me
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hill and valley, dale and field,
And all the charms of Nature yield.

A BRIGHT, sunny day, at the end of April, and a light, open traveling-carriage, with gay, prancing post-horses, and two very pretty girls within: one in a bonnet and feathers, and a rich traveling pelisse lined with sables; and the other with a small mourning bonnet over her beautiful face, and covered up in a large warm cloak, which hides her own, and which her companion keeps tucking up about her to keep her warm.

For though the sun is so bright there is a sharpness still in the wind.

That was a pretty sight!

To see the patroness so careful of the dependant, tending her, and petting her, and looking after her comforts. And why?

Because the young dependant was delicate, and shivering with

cold, and just recovering from a nervous fever, and because she herself was hale, and hearty, and well.

Pride never does such things as these.

Pride argues quite in a different manner, and teaches us to claim all these services from others as due to our station, and to dispense with them to others, as not suited to theirs.

Pride teaches to look at ourselves and others—not as we *are*, but as we stand—not as we want, but as we have—hardening the heart, and perverting the head: the devil's own passion it is.

It was the absence of pride which rendered them both so happy. Augusta had found a friend; and a friend was an equal: Angela had found a sister; and a sister was an equal.

It was not pride: but it was the rescue from that humbling and false position in which she had found herself in Mrs. Usherwood's family, that rendered this sort of instinctive, rather than avowed equality, so exquisitely delightful to her. And if you never were in such a position yourselves, don't pretend to be philosophical, and "don't care" about other people's mortifications. Mortification is always a very painful thing; and to a fine temper far more painful than any of the material privations of poverty.

And this, I hope, you will remember in your dealings with those not so well off as yourselves.

But as for my describing the sweet feeling of devotion and gratitude with which Miss Darby's generous conduct filled Angela's heart, I despair of it, though I repeat myself in attempting it.

You might see it in those sweet, grateful eyes, and in that affectionate smile, when she looked up and spoke to her, in answer to the many kind, considerate attentions that were lavished upon her. They were very sweet, and not more sweet than necessary; for Angela was still weak and nervous, and a little thing was sufficient to weary or upset her.

But the day was so fine; the pleasant crispness of the air from a slight frost so animating; the corner of the carriage she occupied so easy; and the large wadded cloak so warm, that, added to the cheerful talk of her lively companion, she found this journey of a few hours perfectly delightful.

It was evening before they arrived at Donnington.

It is an ugly country, is the neighborhood of Newmarket, with its wide downs, its uninclosed tracts of cornfields, and its black clumps of trees scantily appearing from time to time, and looking like spectral, rather than verdant, groves in the landscape. Woods in these situations scarcely diminish the bareness and dreariness of the view

at all. They look only like great black blocks scattered here and there, and rather take off from, than add to, the character of the picture.

The day, too, had by this time clouded over; the wind had changed to the east; a sort of sea-fog had arisen, and overcast the sky, not with heavy clouds, which are in themselves an interesting spectacle, but with that dull, gray, uniform tint, which would render any scene ugly, and did most particularly this.

"Isn't it hideous?" said Augusta, as they left the hedgerow trees, groves, and pastures, of northern Essex, and entered the classical county. "Isn't it horrid! hideous and horrid! as the passion which makes some people prefer this county to all England—the passion for racing? Did you ever see a race, Angela?"

"No, never: indeed, how should I?"

"Well, I have often amused myself with thinking, among the other fantastic tricks that men and women play upon this our little globe, of that commonest of all tricks, the 'much ado about nothing.' I dare say you never saw a house turned upside down for a ball."

"Yes, I have seen that," said Angela. "My experience is greater than you think. You forget I was in the very center of such things at Mrs. Usherwood's."

"Oh! ay, to be sure; and you would see the 'much ado about nothing' to perfection there. The 'much ado,' I'll be bound, there is always; the 'much ado' to excess in houses of that sort; and in the ball, 'the nothing,'" said she, saucily. "Good gracious! a ball at Mrs. Usherwood's! Only conceive! I should like to have seen what that would be like," added the haughty daughter of *ton*.

"Why, I suppose very like any other ball," said Angela, innocently.

"Banging on piano-fortes, and tinkling of harps, and blowing of brass horns, and so on, you mean; and men and women twirling about. I'll be shot if that is not your idea of a ball, you foolish thing! My goodness! how unlike ball is to ball! Well, but ball or not ball, or whatever sort of ball, I, who walk about in my lazy way, and never take trouble about any thing Do put this boa round your throat, the wind over these detestable bare hills is so cold. Are your feet warm? quite sure?"

She settled these little matters to her satisfaction, and then laughed, and went on.

"Am I not a most discursive genius? I never can keep to the point. I was going to talk about the 'much ado about nothing,' as concerns racing; and I ran away to balls. Poor balls! they are in-

nocent of this matter in comparison with racing! La! what a fuss is made about a two-year-old filly! I wish people took as much care of their children. And the talk and the betting, and the riding up and down, and the jockeying and the anxiety, and the pain and the pleasure! Then out comes the filly, with John Chapman, in pink and yellow, on her back, and, *presto!* it's gone; and before you can say, 'It is,' it's over. I've seen it a hundred, ay, hundreds of times, when I've been on the course with mamma."

"You can't think," she added, after a pause and a slight sigh, "but a moment of time comprises that, of which the consequences are often long and painful enough, to be sure. Jockeyism! oh, it is such a low sort of thing! It seems to drag down every body connected with it—it casts a grim shadow, far and wide, upon all who have to do with it, I think. That's the reason, I have often thought, why Mr. Vavasour can not make up his mind to like us; and yet," said she, rallying, "he's just as great a 'much ado about nothing' in his way, as we are in ours. We none of us do any thing: what a cheat life is!"

Angela would not be always moralizing, and in no other way could she just now answer.

She turned the conversation by saying—

"I don't really think this country so ugly as you do."

She was one of those privileged ones who could find a beauty in almost every form of natural scenery; for which, of course, she would have been despised, if her opinion had been worth thinking about.

"Don't you really? well, I wish I was like you in that, as in many other things, that's all. There now—there's my paternal hall of Donnington. Do you see that great black line stretching pompously down over hill and dale for two long miles? That's the avenue. Now, candidly confess you never, in your life, saw any thing so ugly!"

"An avenue in profile," said Angela, "is never very pretty."

"Oh, it's dreadful! There now, do you see the white object there? That's the house, with great staring sash-windows, and a pediment, and a portico, all *en règle*; the ugliest, most uncharactered affair you ever saw—a sort of giant specimen of all the houses you see in the Edgeware Road, New Road, City Road, Borough Road, and so on. This is what they call the park: a monstrous green field, with more docks and thistles than the good farmers allow in their real fields, and a few deer instead of short-horns. Do you see that scrubby, brushwoody place, on that side? that used to be an oak

wood; but it's been cut down—gone to commemorate some of the exploits of the Dingaway filly and John Chapman. Now we come to the lodge: now you may look *down* the avenue—that's better, it must be confessed: but except one little bit where our children are to be, Angela (for this is not their lodge), that's the only view upon the estate—the *one* view; and we make much of it, you may be sure. Nobody ventures to speak of Donnington without mentioning the avenue."

"They may well mention it," said Angela; who, with her painter's eye, was already measuring the magnificent lime-trees of which it was composed.

"This is beautiful, with the trees just coming into leaf, and must be still more beautiful when they are in flower."

"The lime is a very sentimental tree, is it not? Werther, in that ridiculous romance, which I once read at an inn where I was stopping with mamma, and had nothing else on earth to do—that fantastic man used to go and mourn and mope under the linden-trees, if I remember right. And I often think Mr. Vavasour's like that fantastic being; he lives so in himself, as I may say, just as I live *so out* of myself; he is always thinking and never talking; I always talk and never think. Strange, strange contrast! Pray Heaven the contradiction go no further!" added she in a low voice.

"This Mr. Vavasour seems a very interesting person, however," said Angela.

"He'd just suit you," said Augusta, turning quickly round; "and I dare say you'd just suit him. But take care you don't let him think so; I am capable of killing you, if you played me such a trick as that."

Angela could only give a sad smile.

"I have no heart to give or take," she said.

"Oh, so you think! but all that is nonsense," said Augusta, irritably.

"So you think, too; but you do not know: perhaps I am able to bear these things better than others. But I know what I have lost, and where alone I shall find it again."

"Well, pray don't find that, or any thing else, in Mr. Vavasour," cried Augusta, as if struck with a sudden spasm of jealousy.

"I give you this warning, he's mine, and I'll defend my property in him against the world. There is nothing I shouldn't be capable of in such a case, I know.—I said I'd kill you—I should do it—I should do it as readily as peel an apple—I would do it to any body who dared come between me and Vavasour."

She looked almost fiercely as she spoke, and Angela caught the first glimpse of those faults which Miss Grant had taught her she must expect to find.

"As I am sure I shall never give you just cause, I hope you will not kill me by mistake," she said, rather drily.

The tone seemed to strike Miss Darby, and she stopped and colored; then, after a pause of a few minutes, she said, with more composure:

"How ridiculous and tragedy-queen like you must think me!"

"Do forgive me, Angela," she went on, "for speaking in such a rough, violent way; but don't you see . . . But it would be too mortifying to me for you to own that you see it, only you can not help it . . . how I am bound, heart and soul, to Vavasour? I have loved him from the time I was a little child; I have never loved or cared for any thing on earth but him; and now—and now, with his perverse indifference of manner—though he loves me, I know, in his heart, I could be jealous as a fiend."

"You must think of me," she went on, after again stopping and endeavoring to check her own vehemence, "as of one possessed, when I am upon this subject, and you must pity and not blame me; possessed I am—possessed as that wretched Procris, that more wretched Phædra Oh, don't let us talk of it—it is cruel, cruel play!"

The carriage had traversed the avenue of two miles, and now stopped before the house door.

"Here we are at last," said Augusta, passing her hand hastily over her burning cheek, upon which there really was a tear—a scorching tear. "And now, don't look uncomfortable. It must be so disagreeable, first coming to your new home. But don't think about it—any thing that I can do to make you happy shall be done. And there's only mamma—never think of mamma; she's very good-natured, and nobody does. Stay; keep on your boa while you cross the hall—it's a very temple of the winds," she went on, as they entered a large, lofty, dreary looking hall, into which air from all quarters was blowing, and which felt very damp and uncomfortable, there being, indeed, a fireplace, but no fire.

"Where's mamma?" to the man who opened the door.

"In her boudoir, Miss Darby, I believe."

"Come along then, up these stairs. Is the next room to mine got ready, as I ordered?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Send the housekeeper—send my maid."

"Mrs. Williams, what rooms have you got ready?" as the housekeeper met her in the gallery, to which they had now ascended.

"Your old room at the end of the passage, if you please, Miss Darby."

"And the room next it for Miss Nevil?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Come along, then."

And she led Angela hastily to the very end of the long, wide, cold gallery, at the entrance to which they were standing, and where Angela, still very susceptible to impressions, could not help shivering. "Come into your room and warm yourself first."

"No fire!" as she opened the door, looking aghast. "No fire, on such an evening as this!"

"Mrs. Darby said as there was a fire in your room, Miss Darby, that there would not be one wanted in both."

"I never heard such a shame!" cried Miss Darby, passionately. "Come into the house on such a day as this, and no fire, and she so delicate! My room! why the fire's out there! I never in my life saw any thing so shameful! Go and tell Matty to come this instant and light a fire, if you please, Mrs. Williams. Can't you make a little more haste, good woman?" as Mrs. Williams slowly retired.

"It's such a house, and such management!" Augusta went on impetuously; turning to Angela, "you'll be perfectly miserable, and ill again directly. Why doesn't Matty come?—I declare it's enough to drive one mad to have to do with such a parcel of slugs. Matty! Matty!" running down the gallery; "what is the woman about? Oh, here she comes!"

"Why this wood is quite wet and green!" as the woman put down her wood-basket; "no wonder the fires go out! Here, put in plenty of paper;" tearing in pieces a road-book she had in her hand;—"stuff it in well, woman."

"La! that's not the way to make a fire!—was any thing on earth ever so stupid? You haven't even brought the bellows! Well, what do you stand staring for? can't you run and fetch them? Stay, let me see if I can't make it blaze."

And down went Miss Darby upon her knees before the grate, blowing at it with the cover of the unfortunate road-book; and turning every now and then to Angela, who looked very pale, and almost blue with cold, though she did all she could not to shiver.

"Get upon the bed, and cover yourself with the blankets; and if that fool Williams has a drop of hot water in the house you shall have some negus."

"Here, give me the bellows!" as the housemaid re-entered; "and send Maria up to me directly. Why doesn't she come? Can't she have her chat out when she's served us? Tell her to come up instantly."

Miss Darby, while she raved and scolded, kept plying the fire vigorously. There was soon a cheerful blaze, which flickered round the apartment; not a very pleasant one it must be supposed, but one of the best which this large, ill-appointed house afforded.

The bed was of dark green moreen, and so were the window-curtains and the covers of the small, uncomfortable chairs; an old-fashioned mahogany dressing-table, with an old-fashioned swing-glass; a little three-cornered wash-hand-stand; two very old bedside carpets, and a piece before the fire, comprised the furniture. A shepherdess and some bags of wool, with tails and horns, representing sheep; a lady with a dove, and a lady with a lamb; a few groups of fishermen in high-crowned hats; a donkey; and some women in an unknown costume; and specimens of pen and pencil drawing, as carried on by the generation but one before them, hung in black frames upon the walls and over the mantelpiece; placed at each end of which were two grim-looking tritons, holding candlesticks; and a black vase of old-fashioned earthenware was in the center.

Such was the very antique furnishing of the house of the very fashionable Mr. and Mrs. Darby. But Dingaway fillies and John Chapman had absorbed all superfluous money here. It was in strong contrast with the elegance, comfort, and good taste of the one she had just left, where, though little was given to display, every thing was calculated to contribute to the real well-being of its guests. Angela was not used to luxury, and in health never thought of it; but she was now sinking with fatigue; and oh, how she longed for an arm-chair!

"I can't think," said Augusta, now rising from her knees before the fire, and looking round for water to wash her hands, blackened all over with the coal she had been shifting up and down; "I can't think what makes this room look so gloomy and uncomfortable! Before I went abroad these things made no impression upon me. I suppose I was too young to care; and I don't care for myself now; but it's really miserable, isn't it, for you! Do lie down on the bed, Angela. What do you keep sitting up in that uncomfortable chair for? you look just ready to drop. My goodness, if she isn't going!"

—flying to the bell, and ringing it with all her might—“Angela!—love!—dear one! don’t faint—pray don’t faint!”

Shaking and rubbing her hands vehemently, till Angela opened her eyes again, and smiled.

“Oh, for Heaven’s sake, don’t let that fair, long throat of yours bow just like a drooping lily! For Heaven’s sake, keep up!”

“Did any thing upon earth ever look more lovely or interesting than she does?” thought Augusta. “She certainly is the sweetest creature in the whole world. I would be content to suffer as she has done to look like her. I could almost envy her this great loveliness, if she were not such a dear, nice creature.”

She was thinking this as she held Angela supported in her kind arms; and upon the entrance of the maid she got her upon the bed.

“Lie there, dear,” she said, so kindly. And then she was so busy arranging the uncovered pillows—for the bed had not been sheeted—laying a clean cambric handkerchief under her face, lest the hard blue and white covering of a pillow of stones—(it really seemed so)—should tease her; then covering her up, pulling and closing the curtains to make it look comfortable: so busy, so active, so very, very kind.

Do you think the heart of Angela was not overflowing with love and gratitude as there she lay, following her with her eye, but quite unable to speak?

Do you think she will ever forget this day?

No; never—never!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Oh, pursue,
Pursue the sacred counsels of your soul,
Which urge you on to virtue.

MRS. DARBY was a very thin, delicate-looking, fine lady, with a countenance not ill-natured, but which was void of all that expression of kind feeling, and wanting even in that air of mere good-nature, which often may be seen upon these sort of faces.

Never was any thing so devoid of all approach to sentiment as the somewhat fine features of this very fine lady.

She was dressed in the most *recherché* manner; in a very elegant half-dress, which suited her well-preserved middle age. Her figure was as slender as when she was nineteen, and only forfeited its claim to the charms of that age by being a little more angular and thinner. Her dress was of the most fashionable *negligé* order, trimmed with quantities of fine lace; her cap and pale primrose ribbons covered hair that was just beginning to show a few silver threads; her watch and equipage hung from her girdle, looking very rich and handsome, as were her brooches, bracelets, and rings. For a woman of the first fashion, she was a little too much *breloquée*—if I may use the word—ladies belonging to the turf often are; in other respects, she had the air of rather an unexceptionable woman of *ton* than that of a perfect gentlewoman—an article we much less often meet with.

The two girls had taken off their traveling-dresses before they came down, and were now dressed for dinner: Augusta in black velvet, which set off her fine figure, her transparent complexion, and raven black hair, to the highest advantage; and Angela, in her dress of black silk and crape, looking as elegant as the other did striking. There was, certainly, a refinement in her manner and appearance which her companion in some degree wanted.

The daughter of Captain and Mrs. Nevil, and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Darby, had, indeed, received strongly their share of that mysterious character which descends from parents to children, and were in strong contrast to each other, accordingly. There was that in Angela which people mean when they talk of “blood;” there was that in Augusta which people mean when they talk of “the turf.”

It was impossible not to be struck—and very forcibly struck—with the contrast, which was at the present moment increased by the delicacy of Angela’s health. Her long illness had subdued her spirits, and given a more than usual softness to her motions; there was, too, as Augusta had observed, something peculiarly lovely in the bend of her long, delicate throat, bowed down as some lily flower by the weight of what was, in fact, a small and the most beautifully formed head in the world.

Mrs. Darby had been a beauty herself, and something in this style, as far as the mere outward form went. She never had much admired her dashing daughter, whose robust health and high animal spirits were always, as she declared, a vast deal too much for her nerves. She felt quite relieved, therefore, when she saw the companion selected for Augusta.

“Two such girls as Augusta,” as she afterward declared, “she

was sure must have killed her ; but she saw, at the first glance, that Miss Nevil was quite one of her own sort."

The wheel of fortune had indeed turned round. Angela seemed destined to make a favorable impression upon every one she met.

It was a great, large, lofty dining-room, with immense sash-windows placed in a bow at one end ; which windows looked out upon a grass-plot that wanted mowing, and where the rank grass was hanging in most piteous disorder over a few flower-borders which had been cut in it, and which had a great many rough, coarse, herbageous plants growing in them. There were some great heaps of double primroses, purple, red, and yellow, and common auriculas in great straggling bunches a foot across, showing that they had stood there for years neglected.

Two or three old chestnut-trees and a few shrubs, rendered stunted and ugly by that negligence which had suffered animals at different times to crop the ends of their branches, stood upon this ugly lawn ; the park stretched beyond in green undulations, which were terminated by distant swelling hills, diversified into green or brown patches of color, according to the crops thereon to be raised, and separated by low, compact hedges, with scarcely a tree to be seen ; the long gloomy line of the avenue excepted, which extended something like an interminable funeral procession toward the southwest.

The furniture of the room was of the same description as that of the bed-rooms. The faded silk curtains, which had once been rich, were drawn up in festoons to the top of the immensely high windows, and surmounted with gold and white cornices ; the gold and white cabriole chairs, covered with the same faded silk ; the once rich carpet, the flowers of which, trodden by the foot of man or dog for nearly three quarters of a century, were almost defaced ; the old card-tables against the wall ; the looking-glasses, with their frames surmounted with antique garlands of gilded flowers and wheat-ears, told of splendor past and unrepaired decay. The chairs were all ranged symmetrically against the sides of the room ; the sofa, which was advanced a little into the bow, being the only object that broke the disagreeable monotony. Not a book, a drawing, an album, a work-basket, to be seen. Nothing but the " Racing Calendar " upon one table, and the " Peerage " and " Baronetage " upon the other. Such was the drawing-room of Mrs. Darby.

Augusta, who rarely opened a book, was as unconscious of that depressing feeling of bareness and desolation which such rooms present to people of education as her mother ; in fact, she was very in-

different about the *matériel* of life : her spirits were so good, and her out-of-door occupations so many, that she cared little for the inside of the house. The uncomfortableness of Angela's room had struck her, because her heart was so good that she felt for the wants of an ailing friend, but she never felt these things for herself.

So she opened the loftily architrued door of this vast, cold, uncomfortable-looking apartment, and introduced her friend without making a single reflection, either good, bad, or indifferent, as to the appearance of things.

Not so Angela. Her mind, accustomed to activity, and hungering after new ideas, seemed as if it could not exist without some intellectual nutriment ; the appearance of the room struck her with the most uncomfortable sense of want—want of all that was to furnish food for her active and intelligent mind. There was not a book, there was not a picture, to be seen ; without, not one object of interest ; within, not one source of employment. She could not help feeling confounded at all she observed, and astonished at Miss Darby's indifference.

She had never even mentioned, in her various exclamations against the mismanagement of home, this total want of all mental food.

However, into this large, forlorn-looking drawing-room they entered, the only object of interest being, as I said, Mrs. Darby, very fashionably dressed, sitting upon a sofa, with a little white Cuba dog, dressed for dinner also, in a new blue ribbon and gold brooch, lying by her side ; and the " Racing Calendar," and the requisite appendages to all well-ordered families, Mr. Burke's " Peerage" and his " Gentry of England," the only books upon the table.

" Well, my dear, I am glad to see you at last," said Mrs. Darby, as her daughter came up, to whom she gave her hand without rising from the sofa. I thought you never would arrive !"

" Miss Nevil," said Augusta. Angela courtesied. Mrs. Darby civilly half rose, looked as if she liked her appearance very much, and said—

" Miss Nevil, I am delighted to see you. You are very good, I am sure, to come among the savages."

" I am but *too* happy," said Angela. " My only wish will be to return Miss Darby's kindness by proving of some use to her. You are very good, madam, to excuse my youth and inexperience."

" Oh ! as for that, pray don't thank me for that : I love youth, and I hate experience. I have had enough of experienced ladies in my time, and I abhor the very sight of them ; they are all so

hideously ugly for one thing," said Mrs. Darby. "But you, my dear—excuse me for saying so—have a remarkably pleasing appearance, and you remind me so much of old times, that I shall always believe I have two daughters instead of one, when you come down with Augusta into the dining-room. Augusta, my dear, tell me what o'clock it is—(there was not even a clock upon the mantelpiece)—for my watch has stopped. I forgot to wind it up last night."

Augusta looked at her watch—"Five minutes to seven, mamma."

"Then ring for candles. We may as well have the room lighted up and the shutters shut—it's such a dark evening."

"Williams," as the butler opened the door, "are the gentlemen come in yet?"

"No, madam; but it will not be long first. Black Tom is just come in—he rode off the course after the first heat was over. Mr. Darby ordered him home to tell Giles something or other about the stables; for there's many gentlemen coming down with their horses to-night."

"Well, and what news did Black Tom bring?" interrupted Augusta, impatiently. "Why, in the name of goodness, are we to hear nothing that's going on till we choose to ring the bell for candles? How went the first heat?"

"Why, there was not much to tell, Miss Darby," was the butler's reply, "or I should have been up with the news, I'm sure. There was only one heat, and the Dingaway came in second."

"To be sure; I knew it would be so."

"I never knew a horse of Mr. Darby's win a race in my life; it's always so!" added Mrs. Darby, languidly. "I wish it would cure him of the turf, I'm sure. Well, fetch candles; but you needn't light up the room, you know, till after dinner. I wonder when we shall have dinner?" yawning. "I get so exhausted. Do tell Davies to bring me a cup of tea."

Augusta had turned gloomily to the window, and stood drumming upon the panes with her fingers.

"I hate to be vanquished—to lose even a race," said she to herself. "It's so ridiculous to keep upon the turf and be always distanced. If I must keep racing horses, at least I would do it better...."

But hearing her mother speak of being exhausted, and ask for tea, she immediately remembered Angela.

"And bring a cup of hot tea for Miss Nevil, and tell them to put some ginger in it—and a little bread and butter, too, Williams," to

the man. "My dear child, you'll be killed with our irregular hours, if I don't take care of you."

The time crept heavily along.

Mrs. Darby sat on her sofa, playing with the ornaments which hung to her watch equipage, and from time to time talking to and caressing her dog.

Miss Darby strolled up and down the vast room, seeming lost in her own thoughts. She was in the habit of spending hours, nay days, doing nothing; and her own thoughts were so lively, and her body so active, that she appeared not to know what it was to suffer from *ennui*.

But Angela, to whom the habit of continual occupation had become a second nature, found the time insupportably long. There she sat, without one single object to occupy or amuse her, and having looked round the room, reflected a little upon its air of old magnificence and present decay; thought a little upon the dull, formal lives our ancestors seemed to be content to lead, wondered how it could have been endured, and settled with herself that she would far rather be sewing coarse sheets for Mrs. Whitwell than having nothing to do but play with a Cuba dog like Mrs. Darby; she resolved the first thing in the morning to arrange some work or other which might be admissible into Mrs. Darby's drawing-room. She felt herself becoming quite stupid, and sat there thinking of nothing but when dinner *would* come, and trying to smother her yawns.

It was nine o'clock before a prodigious noise and bustle in the hall announced the arrival of the gentlemen.

They came, some in dog-carts, some on horseback, some in phaetons, some in britchkas and four. They were speaking at the top of their voices, making an immense clatter with their boots upon the marble hall floor, throwing down their hats and heavy whips with a loud voice, hallooing and laughing, and in prodigious spirits.

"Where are the ladies? Where are Mrs. and Miss Darby? Tell them to send up dinner. Show the gentlemen to their rooms; we shall all be dressed in five minutes."

And then the drawing-room door opens, and Mr. Darby just puts his head in.

"The Dingaway's won; that's all. Huzza! What do you say to that, Tissy?" to Augusta.

And the door is shut, and Mr. Darby retires to his toilet.

"No, it hasn't! it really hasn't!" cries Mrs. Darby, fairly roused from her indifference by this most unlooked-for intelligence. "Real-

ly, Augusta, is it possible, do you think? I must go up to Mr. Darby's dressing-room and hear more."

"Are you not very glad that Mr. Darby's horse has won?" said Angela, going up to her friend, who had been, a quarter of an hour before, expressing the bitter mortification she felt at these repeated defeats. Are you not very glad? I am so happy on your account."

"Good girl! be happy for both, then. No; that's the deuce of it! this racing never brings good any way. I was vexed the race was lost, and now I am sorry it is won. It will only make my father the more infatuated about it than ever. Did you ever hear such a brutal noise as they all made coming into the hall? One might as well live among a pack of hounds. And they are as hungry, too, as hounds—as rapacious after their odious gains! To see a set of men in such ecstasies of triumph, because they've filched a parcel of paltry hundreds out of other men's pockets! Gambling is such a *mean* vice! That's what makes me hate it so," she said, with extreme bitterness.

And now the noise in the hall is renewed—the gentlemen are all coming down from their rooms; and you hear the candles setting down upon the marble slabs; and they are stopping to talk over the events of the day. Loud and triumphant voices are relating their various feats, and the odds they held, and the men they have taken in; and loud laughter follows over the unfortunate pigeons thus plucked of their feathers; and then the door at last opens, and they come up in a crowd to pay their respects to Miss Darby.

A motley crowd it was: there were rough-looking black-leg sort of men, no better in appearance than mere horse-dealers, with the true low, jockey cut, though, in fact, all men of fashion and fortune; there were tall, elegant men of high family, looking extremely good-for-nothing and extremely handsome; there were rough, hearty-looking fellows, just enjoying their first victory, and, as yet, uncorrupted; and boys, with fine open countenances and gentlemanlike manners, commencing their first campaign: there were the decoys and the victors all rejoicing together, for Dingaway had won, and they had all taken the odds, more or less, which were prodigiously against her.

Miss Darby seemed known to most of them; and the rest were introduced. Angela knew one only—it was Mr. O'Hara.

He had no sooner paid his respects to Miss Darby than, turning round, he saw her, and flew up to her, exclaiming: "You here! How prodigiously lucky I am! I thought the mischief was in it,

and I was never to see you more. I hope you haven't forgotten me! You can not, surely! Don't you remember the evening at *that* Mrs. Usherwood's, when you played so divinely? I went to all her parties after that for a long time, hoping to see you again; but you never came down, so at last I went there no more. Do speak, say you haven't forgotten me."

"No, I have not; I recollect the evening very well. You were so good as to like my playing."

"And have you never played there since?"

"Yes, lately I have."

"Oh, if I'd but known that, wouldn't I have been there to hear you! And now," looking round, "I don't believe they've got a piano-forte in this house; isn't that provoking? It's quite barbarous; but I do not think Miss Darby plays. Ain't she a very fine girl?"

"Very handsome, indeed, I think her," said Angela, glancing at Augusta, who was now standing surrounded by a crowd of gentlemen, with whom she was laughing and talking in a loud voice; and with a certain almost rude familiarity, so to speak, which was extremely painful to Angela's taste and sense of propriety.

Such a set as they looked, too!

But Augusta, in spite of her better qualities, was unhappily far from insensible to the pleasure of gratifying the most ordinary female vanity, and enjoyed being the center of admiration to a crowd of fashionable men, however much she might despise or dislike each individual in particular.

Her voice, at a high key, might now be heard above the rest: she was abusing them all round, to be sure; railing at their pursuits, and aiming the shafts of her ready wit, without mercy, upon them all in turn. And this was done in so familiar a manner—she suffered herself to be so entirely run away with by her spirits; she condescended to put herself upon such terms of equality—the equality of raillery—with all these gentlemen gamblers, that Angela, shocked and disgusted, knew not which way to look.

Augusta at last, turning her way, and observing she seemed left out, came up to her, followed by her train of obsequious cavaliers, and began endeavoring to bring her into the conversation that was going on, with—

"Oh, yes! I'm sure Miss Nevil thinks so too: don't you, Angela? Why don't you support me? Why don't you say what you think of this infamous system of pick-pocketing? Making of books!—pretty book-making! Much your books will edify the world—to be read when Shakspeare is forgotten!" And so she ran on.

Mr. and Mrs. Darby now appeared, in high good humor with each other.

Of course, they were very particularly so when Mr. Darby had won: and, to do Mrs. Darby justice, she bore his losses with so much equanimity, not to say indifference, when luck went the wrong way, that they were almost always good friends, even then. But to-day they were both in the highest possible good humor. Mr. Darby was, however, less demonstrative in his satisfaction than were his companions. The fact was, that the matter was too seriously important to his happiness to find vent in outward signs of joy.

The man who has just narrowly escaped from some tremendous danger, is not usually noisy in the expression of his feelings.

Mr. Darby had, in truth, been saved from utter, irretrievable ruin, by the unexpected success of the Dingaway.

He was, though nobody but himself knew it, as he would have styled it, "done up." He had betted madly upon his favorite, against whom, as I have said, the odds were enormous; he had scorned to hedge, resolved to play double or quits, and to stake his all—character as well as fortune—upon this last throw; for well he knew he had not the wherewith to pay his debts of honor should he lose, and the back settlements of America, or a pistol to his temples, was his alternative.

Dingaway had, however, won! and Mr. Darby had made more thousands than I will venture to name; and he once more felt himself the real master of his own estate and his own house, which he had not in fact done for a very long time.

Mrs. Darby began to think of a month, at least, in London; but Augusta, who was little aware of the true state of her father's affairs (of which, indeed, she was kept in profound ignorance), cared as little for his success as it was possible for a really good-natured daughter to do.

Now they are all sitting down to dinner.

The dining-table and its appendages are the only modern and luxurious things in the house.

A good dinner, a *recherché* dinner, is as necessary to men of this stamp as any dinner at all to other men; that portion of their lives not spent in their stables, or occupied upon their betting-books, is usually passed away in devising, describing, or devouring good dishes.

No expense is, or must be, spared here: the very commonest every-day dish—the beefsteak pudding or the boiled fowl—they have methods of making as expensive as the rarest of viands.

There was a most excellent dinner you may be sure ; and like he who roasted the wild boars for Mark Antony, Mr. Darby's French cook possessed the magical art of being ready at all hours. Armed with his innumerable contrivances, this man of resource was never found wanting ; every thing came up *à point*, as if the dinner had not been ordered for half-past seven, and it was now nearly ten o'clock..

That there was abundance of the most delicate and expensive wines served round, at this dinner of the first order, you must not doubt ; or that there was a vast quantity drunk even while the ladies were at table, and a vast quantity more after they had left it, many of the gentlemen appearing in the drawing-room no more that night ; and of those who did come, many might better have stayed away.

The dessert was as sumptuous as the dinner, but the ladies did not sit long at it: Mrs. Darby soon made a move ; and between eleven and twelve o'clock they entered the drawing-room, and rung for tea.

Mrs. Darby flung herself upon a sofa and fell asleep, and Augusta was just about to do the same, when, looking at Angela, she sprang up, and exclaimed—

How pale, jaded, and disgusted you look, dear child ! One would think you had just lost all the money those wretches have won. Go to bed ! don't sit up for them. Come along to bed ! nay, don't think I'm not going with you. I know what servants are made of pretty well—don't I ?—and I shall go myself to see your bed warmed, and that it's properly aired. Why, la, child ! these house-maids of ours would no more care to put you into a damp bed than any thing—they are so used to all these drunken beasts coming tumbling in like so many swine. It's only the first night—when you get a little more used to our ways, and they see *I will* have you taken care of, I'll leave you to yourself."

And the kind-hearted girl was as good as her word ; and she *did* see Angela's bed properly prepared, and she did stand by while Mrs. Maria, with a very sulky face, put her into it ; and she would not allow her to fold up her things herself, for she saw she was so tired she could hardly stand ; and then, having laid her comfortably upon her pillow, and kissed her, and told her to sleep well, and bade her a most affectionate good night, Miss Darby returned to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
Repairs to search the gloomy cave of Spleen.
Rape of the Lock.

MR. O'HARA was the first to leave the dining-room.

Though he had only seen Angela that one evening at Mrs. Usherwood's, the impression she had made upon him was more durable—to do him justice—than such sort of impressions often prove: he had been struck with a sincere admiration for her talents; and being, in spite of his off-hand manners, a sensible, not to say very clever young fellow, he seemed at once to have discerned how greatly superior she was to any of the young ladies to whom he was in the habit of devoting his homage. He was charmed with her beauty, and enchanted by her playing; but was there a deeper and more earnest interest excited?

Be that as it may, it was with much pleasure he beheld one he had felt so much admiration for, but more especially one whose music had enchanted him so excessively, in the very last place he would have expected to meet her, namely, Mr. Darby's dining-room.

Much was he disappointed, therefore, when, having performed the difficult task for one of his habits—that of tearing himself from the rapidly circulating wine—he found no one in the room when he entered it but Mrs. Darby, dozing in one corner of the sofa.

He cared not to disturb the lady of the mansion, whose conversation, never very brilliant, was voted by all the young men who frequented the house a dreadful bore in the evening; at which time Mrs. Darby was usually half asleep, and maintained her part with the miserable drowsy politeness of one tired to death, and all her faculties already slumbering.

So he walked about the room in search of something to amuse himself with.

There was nothing but the "Racing Calendar," and the "Peerage," and "Gentry of England." He was no great reader at any time, to be sure, but had there been one or two books about, he might at least have glanced into them for want of something better to do.

He might have picked up a fresh idea or two, had they been thrown in his way; but the circulation of ideas was slow in this mansion.

So he went prowling round the large desolate apartment in hopes of finding a piano-forte and some music-books; every body has a piano-forte and music-books: he could have amused himself with turning over these, for he understood music better than most young men—indeed, extremely well, and loved it better than any thing in the world, but racing and hunting. He might even have played a little, to pass away the time; for he played very agreeably, and composed little waltzes and even wild, fanciful ballads, very prettily.

But no, there was no piano-forte to be seen.

“What is to be done without a piano-forte?” cried he to himself, with dismay. “What’s the use of having that divine creature here, and no piano-forte?”

The card-tables were out, and the packs of uncut cards lying there, and all ready for the usual evening’s amusement.

The evenings at Donnington always terminated in cards. No wonder some people bless the invention of these painted bits of pasteboard, as I have heard them do; how would they get through two or three hours of every twenty-four of their lives without them?

Let us see: say twelve hours a-week—a working-man’s day—fifty-two days in the year—a seventh part of a reasonable, of a responsible, of an immortal being’s time. Say he lives to be three score and ten—ten years employed upon what the old divine called the devil’s pictures!

It is giving him and his a pretty fair share, is it not?

Poor Mr. O’Hara! it was not his fault, this time, that he sighed and sat down to play at patience by himself; for the impatience with which he waited the appearance of the young ladies rendered time unoccupied perfectly insupportable.

So there he sat, sorting his cards, with the candles blazing away on each side of him, and every now and then sighing, and running his fingers through his pretty, curling, brown hair, and looking very dolorous indeed.

At last the door opened—he started up—and enter Miss Darby, alone.

“Oh dear! is it only you, Miss Darby?” said the ingenuous youngster, going up to her, and looking ruefully disappointed.

“Only me!” said she, laughing; “why what would you have? Only me! I would have you to know, Mr. O’Hara, that I play the

part of principal attraction in this house, let who will be in it besides me. How can you be such a bear?"

"I really beg your pardon; I didn't mean to be a bear, believe me; no one more sensible of the attractions of Miss Darby" and he looked so: "but that young lady who was with you at dinner—I saw her once before at Mrs. Usherwood's, and she vanished, after once showing herself, in the most unaccountable manner, as if she'd been a spirit, or merely a voice, or something of that sort, in a German tale: and she seems, indeed, to be a mere apparition," added the young lieutenant, looking round with a very vexed expression of countenance.

"Oh, you *have* seen her before, then! I thought it was a fresh affair, and really began to think I had got a very dangerous sort of rival in the house, you seemed so over head and ears in a twinkling—but you have met her before, it seems, in the society of the delectable Miss Usherwoods. Oh, if she outshone them, no wonder she throws poor little me into the shade!"

She walked up to the tea-table, and sat down to make tea; he followed, and sat down by her.

"I am so glad to see her with you, Miss Darby," he began; "because I think I would rather live with you than with any body in the world. You're so good natured; and not jealous of the beauty of other people, like Miss Matilda Usherwood. It's quite ridiculous, the scene we had the only evening I ever saw her—heard her, I should rather say. Did you ever hear her play? But you've no piano-forte, I see, so you couldn't?"

"No; we have no piano-forte," said Augusta, looking round. "We all hate music here; that is, we none of us care for it; and it makes such a noise. But she's a fine player, is she? The dear creature, she never told me that. I think she is every thing."

"And so *very* beautiful!" added Mr. O'Hara, looking very earnest.

"You think so? Well, I am rather surprised she suits your taste. I should have thought I should have been more according to your raw ideas of the charming. But she is remarkably beautiful for those who have eyes to see it, which I never should have thought you would have had," said Miss Darby, rinsing her cups.

"I don't know," he said, "how it is. I am a raw boy, as you say; and I can easily conceive people not thinking Miss Nevil (now ain't that a sweet name!) nearly so beautiful as you are, whom every body calls so handsome."

"Yes," said she with something of vexation in her tone, "I am

every body's beauty and nobody's beauty—*flamingly* handsome, I know that. Nobody can overlook me."

"I should think not, indeed," was his reply. "And people might easily overlook her, you think? Yes, so they might. She has no color. She is so waxy fair; and with those large eyes, looking so pure, and yet so full of true feeling; and that beautiful long throat, bending so softly, I don't know how. She can't carry herself as you can, Miss Darby; but her ways are so pretty!"

"Oh! she doesn't walk upright like a drill-sergeant, as I do, you mean. She's a dangerous creature."

Was it one of those vague, mystical presentiments of evil? What was it that again shadowed Miss Darby's mind?—Vavasour! It was Vavasour—that Vavasour whom she adored; that Vavasour who was to her what Angela was to O'Hara—the personification of the divine—the ideal, the better influence; that which answered to and summoned forth all the hidden good of her nature. It was Vavasour of whom she thought. It was impossible for her to resist the feeling which associated him with Angela.

She could have been jealous, unjust, envious, but she shook off the ungenerous feeling—as dew-drops from the lion's mane, so fell all that was base and mean from Augusta Darby.

She laughed, and said—

"Really, Mr. O'Hara, you are quite in love! You are beginning to worship the ideal. You, a horse-racer! When will wonders cease?"

"I never use fine words, as you do, Miss Darby. You women are too metaphysical for me. I don't pretend to deal in such fine things.—Ideal! now, ideal's one: but if you mean I worship beauty most heartily when I see it, that's true, upon my life."

"Well, then, for once, I tell you—though you worshipers of beauty are in general huge dupes to your eyes, I can assure you—but for once your good genius has led you right; there is not a nicer girl in the universe than Angela Nevil, be the other who she may."

"Well, that's what I like in you, Miss Darby! I never saw a young lady in my life so ready to give another honest praise."

This compliment seemed to please her a good deal. She returned it by saying, with much cordiality—

"And I will say this for you, Mr. O'Hara, I never saw a man in my life more capable of honest admiration."

"I am sure," said he, "I feel quite in a different manner toward Miss Nevil from what I ever did before; though, if I've been in

love once, I've been in it hundreds and hundreds of times. I want to learn who she is. She's an officer's daughter—a gentleman's daughter; but I thought she was a governess, and how comes she here? I am sure Miss Darby can't want a governess?"

"Yes but she can, very much; she's a very indiscreet person, and Angela is come here to keep her in order, and set her tasks, when she's a naughty girl. Don't you think she looks as if she could be very cross?"

"I never saw an angel look sweeter tempered; and if there's a thing I care for, it's sweet temper. What's all the beauty in the world without that? But did you ever hear her play?"

"No, I tell you."

"What a pity! And to have no piano-forte in the house!" added he, looking again ruefully round. "I am a fool about music—perhaps you don't know," he went on—"and it was her playing, I believe, that night, which made such work with me. Hers is the most delicious music you ever heard; quite unlike any body's else. So original—so wildly sweet—so bewitching—so fascinating!"

"What a heap of fine, vulgar epithets you do string together! And if you value my esteem, never let me hear that word *fascinating*. It is too vulgar for any but an infantry regiment. So you like Angela's playing, do you?"

"I believe, if I heard her play for a week, she'd play me out of my five senses. She'd do for me," said Mr. O'Hara.

"Do for you! What do you mean? Why she has done for you, as you call it, already. I never saw any thing so vulgar as you officers do get; always some cant word or another."

"Sorry to offend," said Mr. O'Hara. "No, I feel as if I were my own man yet; but I would not answer for myself if I were with her, and a piano-forte in this house, for a week. I'm sure I should propose to her."

"Why, you're not serious? How very absurd!"

"I don't see the absurdity. I have plenty of money, and the world before me; and I don't see why I shouldn't please myself."

"But what would your governor say?"

"Oh, he—bless you! he says little enough about any thing; and besides, he'd be so consumed glad to have me married, that, provided it was a gentlewoman, he'd not care. And where would I, let me pick the world, find a prettier or a sweeter daughter-in-law for him than this? Besides, I should be a better man all my life for it. I'm sure I should."

Now this good-natured girl immediately began to arrange a

scheme for her friend. Mr. O'Hara was a very kind-hearted fellow; not at all foolish, though, as yet, rather fond of the turf. He was, in fact, a very much cleverer man than he appeared; and his fondness for racing arose merely from his having never been taught to be fond of any thing else, and would disappear when that something else was found. She had just secured Angela, as she thought, for herself; and the happiness she had promised herself in the connection, and the happiness she had already found in it, was very great. But what mattered that? the object in view was a happy marriage, protection, and restoration of rank to Angela; of which last Miss Darby thought very much.

Angela had no mother, no friend but herself, to look to her interests; they should not be neglected in her hands.

No, you good-hearted, generous girl! there was really no expense you would have spared, no trouble you would not have taken, to promote the interests of those you loved.

"She shall have a piano-forte, at least," thought she; "and who knows?"

"Well, Mr. O'Hara, now I think of it, it's really an abominable shame that my trustees have never given me a piano-forte. I will write to Mr. Dobson to-morrow upon the matter. I am sure the old man will let me have one; for, to do him justice, he never refuses what's reasonable. But who shall we get to choose it? Don't let us have an abominable, dunning thing, such as one hears in a Brighton lodging-house; or one tinkling like a bell in a showman's box. I should like a good one."

"Oh, trust me with the business!" said Mr. O'Hara, his eyes sparkling with delight. "I will write up to town to-morrow, if you'll let me, to a very clever fellow, a friend of mine, a regular musical professor: let him go to Broadwood's; he'll choose you a really beautiful one. She's passionately fond of music, I know," he added; "it will prove a great pleasure to her, as well as a source of exquisite delight to me: and if you have the least atom of music in your own composition, you'll be over and above rewarded. But I never did know any one in my life so good-natured as you are."

"She is very fond of music herself, is she?" said Augusta, more than rewarded already by the reflection that she had provided a real source of amusement and occupation for her friend at this dull Donnington.

The next day was a dismal day; at least as far as weather was concerned.

One of those determined days of drizzling rain, without intermission, so utterly dull and uninteresting: there is no character in the aspect of the gray, misty sky—no voice in the wind; there is rain, rain, silent rain, and nothing else.

Trying weather, in a remote country-house, unless people have something to do.

Particularly trying at Mr. Darby's house, where no one had any thing to do. There was not even embroidery going on, that ready resource of the busily idle; books were unknown; even newspapers afforded but little interest for those whose thoughts were contracted into one narrow circle, and who, after they had read all the sporting intelligence which could be collected, usually threw the paper aside, with a heavy yawn.

There was, however, the billiard-table for the men in the morning, where they could bet as much as they liked; and the whist-table at night, which afforded scope for the same fascinating excitement. But what were the poor women to do?

Mrs. Darby, indeed, did as much on rainy days as she did on fair days; she sat and wrote most voluminous letters about nothing at all—a specimen of which sort of composition of hers I have already favored you with; and when she could not take an airing in her carriage, she usually went into her dressing-room, and sorted her laces, or gave orders about her dress: and thus the placid current of her existence flowed unmarked away.

Ennui was not for her—that torment of those formed for better things, that scourge of powers wasted, and energies frittered away; *ennui* was for the intellectual and brilliant Augusta; for one formed by Nature for higher purposes, thus thrown by her ill-judged and careless parents into a wrong direction and a false position.

It matters not with what intelligence the mind is gifted, which has received no education; which has, through the negligent waste of all the precious hours of youth, been allowed to contract trifling habits, and to lose itself in low interests.

Some excitement, even to the finest natures, is necessary to awaken them to life, and make them capable of high things. The thirst for information, the noble curiosity for truth, must be stimulated, must be expanded, by that development of the ideas which a good education furnishes; otherwise, the fairest natural gifts too often remain buried, and would be utterly overlooked, except that a sort of ill-understood and secret uneasiness and discontent affords painful indication of their abortive existence.

“We have no curiosity,” says the judicious Sismondi, “about

that of which we know nothing." An enlightened education is necessary to awaken even the desire to know—to sow the seeds from whence a harvest is to spring; love of reading, most especially, that inestimable boon to man and woman, is rarely acquired in after years, if it has not been the happy result of a good early cultivation.

Poor Augusta was a signal example of this deficiency, and of its consequent disadvantages.

What happiness might not her lively intellects have afforded her, had she but been reared in the blessed habit of employing them well! With powers of reasoning so lucid, with an imagination so bright, with a heart so warm and ardent, what treasures of happiness and of usefulness might not a just development have disclosed!

Now, her character was all confusion; starts of energy, flashes of intellect—flashes which only seemed to pass, like the vain and useless lightning, to disclose the darkness around: there was little happiness, for there was no result; there was neither continuity nor perseverance.

Some one defines the object of education to be, to form good habits: here there were literally no habits, except the doing "every thing by turns, and nothing long," can be called a habit.

The only thing that preserved the character of Augusta from utter destruction, in the perilous position in which she was placed, was the boundless goodness of her heart—that heart, so richly gifted by Nature, seemed, by its genial influences, to pervade the whole being, and preserve it from corruption.

But it was a lamentable sight to Angela to observe the listlessness, the utter vacuity, of Miss Darby's mind, when no object of personal interest excited it, and nothing that could keep her actively employed was to be done; it was so different from her own.

Educated as she had been, her mind carefully cultivated, her memory well stored, her interest upon general subjects excited, her powers of observation and reasoning strengthened, and her deep sense of Christian duty kept forever alive, Angela was never at a loss for interesting employments; it was therefore lamentable to her to see Miss Darby lounging about, wasting all the prime hours of the morning; sauntering from window to window, looking out and abusing the weather, yawning, playing a game at backgammon with Mr. O'Hara, who was equally miserable with herself; and, at last, sinking into that hopeless state of relaxation which renders it impossible to do any thing, because we have been doing nothing.

Nay, even Angela, at this time, felt it, I must own, a little difficult to resist the general infection. This total dearth of all intellectual excitement, this absence of books, really threatened to prove a terrible evil to her; how should she dispose of her time?

She hoped to find a library in the house, and set out in search of it; there was one, of course. In all houses of this description there is certain to be a library, and there are certain to be books in that library worth reading: but, alas! the house seemed to labor under a fatality; the library was appropriated to Mr. Darby's special use, and served him as a dressing-room, armory, sitting-room, and so on.

It was the rendezvous of his racing friends, and the place where he transacted business with his head groom. To all intents and purposes, as far as the women were concerned, the old, precious, English Classics—the Hookers, the Bacons, the Miltons, the Shakespeares, the Clarkes, the Spensers, and the Cowleys, might just as well have been boards painted, gilt, and lettered, like the memorable edition of Xenophon, in twelve volumes, of which mention is made in the never-to-be-forgotten “Adventures of the Bashful Man.”

You have all read the history of the little Lord Linger, in “Evenings at Home:” this was the life of the little Lord Linger, upon a larger scale.

“Will you not begin the drawing lesson?” asked Angela, as Augusta, having played at battledoor and shuttlecock till she was tired, sat yawning upon her sofa, till her jaw was in danger of dislocation; while Mr. O'Hara, in a manner equally listless, turned over the pages of the “Racing Calendar.”

“Suppose we were to make our first attempt this wet morning: shall I fetch down the paper and pencils? Or will you adjourn to my room, where I have put every thing ready?”

“Oh, dear! Well, I suppose we ought to be doing something. Well, if I am to begin, I may as well begin now; but I am sure, now I am come to my senses again, I can't think why I wanted to draw at all: as if *that* would make any difference!” with a sigh. “How silly one is!”

She went up again to the window, and looked out.

“This rain is so provoking! I wanted to get down to the cottage: there we shall have something to do. I do think a wet day in the country is the most detestable thing in the world. What are you about, Angela? Reading? What a book-worm you are! You are as bad as Joan Grant!”

"Yes, I have been reading," laying down the book upon a table, "but I am quite at your disposal; and really, dear Miss Darby—you know I *am* your governess—if you would employ yourself at something, you can not think how much less tedious these wet mornings would be! Do let me give you your first lesson in drawing!"

"Oh, if the piano-forte were but here!" sighed Mr. O'Hara. Then he laid down the "Racing Calendar," and, coming up, "Do you know, Miss Nevil—but I dare say you do—that Miss Darby has written for a piano-forte for you? and then, neither you nor any one else in the house need be dull, for we shall have your divine playing."

"A piano-forte!"

Angela's eyes sparkled; she cast such a grateful look at Augusta.

A piano-forte, and in that house of liberty, where she might indulge her musical genius without restraint—where she might pour forth all that lay hidden within her soul—where she might make her melancholy a companion, and the sweet notes of music her friend!

"Ah, Augusta!—how kind, how more than kind, of you!"

"Are you, then, so very fond of music?" said Augusta.

And then she turned away to the window, and stood looking out; while again the strange resemblance in taste between Angela and Vavasour, and the strange contrast between him and herself, vexed and tormented her, she knew not why. She recollected how fond he was of some kinds of music—music which awakened not the slightest answering feeling of sympathy in herself—how she had seen him stand listening to the High Mass at Palermo, while she had been looking about, amusing herself with any trifling object which the crowded scene furnished.

She could almost have regretted she had sent for the piano-forte.

Then she remembered her scheme for Mr. O'Hara, and was glad; and when she turned round again she was very glad, for there he was sitting close beside Angela, and talking so earnestly about music; and Angela was smiling, and looked so happy and so pretty!

But it was only the thought of the piano-forte that made her at that moment look so happy.

Her heart entirely absorbed with one image, she had not even perceived the admiration which Miss Darby read in the young Irishman's eyes.

By and by they went to the drawing lesson, but they seemed both to feel it tedious: a beginning lesson is inconceivably so to an

impatient or pre-occupied spirit. Augusta soon tossed her pencils away, declaring that this straight-line making and measuring was insufferable; and, laying hold of Angela's portfolio, she said she would try to divert herself with looking through it.

The first water-color drawing that struck her eye, she started and changed color, and looked up sharply and hastily into Angela's face, who was stooping down over a pencil drawing she was finishing for a copy.

"I never saw any thing so strange!" Augusta muttered to herself; "it is as if it had been a drawing of his own!"

But she took no notice of this; she was becoming nervous—she was becoming superstitious—she began to talk to herself of presentiments, of previsions.

Then she looked at Angela again, and said to herself, "What nonsense!" and tried to rouse herself and shake it all off, as she would some confused and disagreeable dream.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Melancholy lifts her head,
Morpheus rouses from his bed.

Ode to St. Cecilia.

THIS provoking rain!

It lasted so long, there was not a day upon which they could get so far even as the cottage: to be sure, the cottage was not very near.

It was a very trying time.

Miss Darby's temper was in hazardous danger of giving way. Nothing to do does try the temper sadly; but Angela was so sweet and so cheerful—so ready to give her little, cross, hasty speeches the go-by—found such pleasant, clever things to say in reply, when Augusta was irritable and unreasonable, that she loved her more and more every hour; and, what may appear strange, but is quite natural, the very infirmities of this generous but faulty character seemed strongly to attach the superior nature to her.

This girl, young as she was, felt something of the tenderness inspired by a thoughtless child, or, rather, something of the earnest

but warm and generous interest which we may imagine the guardian angel feeling for the object of his care.

This young creature, hallowed by sorrow—by that sacred sorrow whose roots are planted in the grave—who seemed to have done with the interests of this world, as far as regarded herself, and to live only for and in others, returned the warm affection of Augusta with a still more earnest and yet deeper feeling: her good, her happiness, her improvement, her welfare, here and hereafter, were becoming subjects of the most intense interest; this very interest, through the benign appointments of our moral nature, enhancing her affection in the highest degree.

And now, as a necessary consequence of all this, Angela began to take a very serious part, and to sympathize most warmly, in all Augusta's various contradictions of feeling upon the subject of Mr. Vavasour.

The subject-matter of half, or more than half, of her friend's conversation, and the object scarcely ever absent, as it would seem, from her thoughts.

It was impossible to hear all that Augusta said, or to be a witness of all that she felt, without being impressed with the idea, not only that Mr. Vavasour must be a very superior person, but that he must and did exercise the happiest influence over the young lady's mind.

Every good disposition seemed strengthened by reference to him; every good action, every endeavor at self-correction, to find in him its motive and its reward; in the miserable defect of high and settled principles, amid all the fitful and uncertain starts of mere impulse, one influence alone seemed ever pervading, one influence alone seemed ever to impel her in a right direction.

Under the daily and hourly guidance of Mr. Vavasour, what might not this fine creature become?

Angela was, at her early years, more alive, perhaps, to the power of such an influence than we, who have fallen into the frosts of age, can easily realize. She knew but too well the force of that almost creative power which the man beloved possesses over the heart of the woman; she felt herself that there was nothing she could not have done, nothing she was incapable of becoming, to have pleased Carteret: and she saw that it was so with Augusta as regarded Vavasour.

Then it was impossible to listen to all these ardent hopes, these anxious fears, these brilliant aspirations after a happiness too great for this world, and witness these cruel fits of depression, doubt, and

despair—all manifested with such unrestrained and such natural vehemence—without being deeply interested in this history of a heart.

It was all so honest, so warm—so rough, it may be—but so true.

How could it be possible that Mr. Vavasour, be he what he might, could find strength to resist so much honest affection?

And yet, even in the very expression of it, even in the most feeling and fervid moments, there was a something, there was a manner—a something unsoft, ungentle, unlovely—a something ever wanting, which accounted to Angela, under the impression she had insensibly received of the high-toned nature of Mr. Vavasour's temper, for all poor Augusta's agonies of doubt, and for her self-depreciation as regarded this subject, in spite of the lofty tone of superiority she assumed and maintained upon every other.

And then, again, this very humility, this self-debasement before the noble image of him she loved, this absence of all pride, of all her native insolence (if I may use the term), whenever she compared herself with Vavasour, was, perhaps more than all, what touched Angela to the heart.

She became quite absorbed in this love-tale; she sympathized with Augusta as rarely friend ever sympathized before; and you may guess how this genuine sympathy endeared her to Miss Darby in return.

They became really and truly friends, in the very widest and best sense of that precious, precious term.

Now has the piano-forte arrived?

It still keeps raining out of doors.

Mr. O'Hara has become perfectly miserable under this confinement; the other gentlemen are all dispersed; there are only Mr. and Mrs. Darby, the two young ladies, and himself remaining in the house.

"If he were so very much in love," says my dear reader, who understands these things much better than I do, "he never could have found the time tedious in the presence of his beloved."

Whether he were very much in love or not, I can not say; all that I know is that he thought himself so, and Augusta thought him so too, and every body thought him so, but the object of his passion herself, who did not believe in it—yet still he did find the time excessively tedious.

Even Angela's spirits, as I have said, were in danger of giving way, and she caught herself yawning and longing for luncheon, din-

ner, bedtime—any thing for a change—in a way she had never done in her life before, not even in her solitary farmhouse, nor when buried in the close street and dismal apartments at Mrs. Levet's.

And here she learned first the lesson that no suffering, and far less any toil, is so utterly wearisome as want of employment.

At last the piano-forte arrived, and they were all alive again.

Miss Darby had been ranging about this large, cold, uninteresting house, vainly seeking for something to amuse her. Mr. O'Hara had been employing himself in performing the part of barber to Mrs. Darby's Cuba dog; Angela, in the uninteresting employment, of preparing drawing copies for a pupil who would never copy; when Augusta, standing at a gallery window which overlooked the offices, heard the rumbling of a cart, and one bearing the not-to-be-mistaken case of a grand piano-forte turned into the backyard. It might actually be compared to the arrival of a cart laden with provisions into a besieged and starving town, such joy did the arrival of this food for the mind afford to this intellectually starving garrison.

Augusta felt that she could—I do not know but she did—jump for joy like a child. Down stairs she ran, burst open the drawing-room door, her cheeks quite red, and eyes sparkling with pleasure, announcing that it was come at last.

“Good gracious, how glad I am! I really believe that I should have died for want of an event, if this blessed cart had not come lumbering into the yard. Come along, Angela! What are you about?” pulling the sheet of paper upon which she was drawing from before her. “Do for goodness' sake, look foolishly glad, if you can. Well, I've only made you run a great score through the castle there.”

She had spoiled the sketch; but what mattered it?

“Your piano-forte's come, I tell you!”

“You don't say so!” cried O'Hara, flinging down the Cuba dog, which he held on his knee. “Then we're all alive again.”

“Well, come along—come along! Were ever you at the back-door, either of you? No, I'll be bound not. Let us get it into the servants'-hall, and unpack it in a jiffy.”

Angela was very unjustly accused of feeling like a philosopher upon the occasion, whatever she might look.

She never was in quite such a hurry about things as Augusta, but her eyes were dancing with pleasure.

They all three went down the long narrow passage which led to the offices, and they were soon in the servants'-hall, surrounded by

men-servants, grooms, stable-boys, footmen, &c., all as delighted with the excitement of a new event, under the infliction of this long series of bad weather, as Miss Darby herself.

The common pleasure seemed to occasion rather too much of a common feeling, Angela could not help thinking, as, standing a little apart—for the elbowing and bustling of a crowd, even of domestic servants, was abhorrent to her—she watched Augusta, busily superintending the tearing open, rather than opening, of the case, and in the midst of her own pleasure had time to grieve over the something forever wanting of female softness and reserve in the manners of her friend, and to rejoice that at this moment it was Mr. O'Hara, and not Mr. Vavasour, who was there.

He was very much too busy and too much excited himself to remark niceties of manner.

It was a beautiful piano-forte to look at, which appeared when the case was at length opened, and Augusta, running up to Angela, pointed to it with equal joy and pride.

"How handsome it looks! I hope to Heaven it will prove a really good one, and that you will thoroughly enjoy it, Angela," said she.

"Thoroughly enjoy it, dear Miss Darby! No fear that I shall not thoroughly enjoy it."

You should see Angela; her speeches are so simple, they are not worth recording. It was her face that spoke for her. I wish you could have seen the glow of grateful affection in her countenance which accompanied the words.

It proved an instrument of the very first class, and by the care of Mr. O'Hara, who had eyes and thoughts for nothing else—not even for Angela, at this moment—it was soon conveyed, with all the interesting circumstances which attend the journey of a grand piano-forte, down a somewhat narrow passage into the drawing-room. There happily established, and placed upon its elegantly carved and fluted legs, it was opened, and in a second the brilliant fingers of Angela were running like those of one inspired, in a sort of ecstasy of delight, over the keys, awakening the long sleeping echoes of that large and lofty room to the soul of music once more.

The instrument wanted a little tuning and setting to rights after its journey, but that, by the care of Mr. O'Hara and Miss Darby, could soon be done; and, in the mean time, Angela had fastened upon it with avidity, pouring forth scales, modulations, chords, and favorite bits of music, like a torrent.

Augusta looked at her with astonishment. She was a Saint Co-

cilia; she was quite a new being; she was enchanting; she was entrancing; she was radiant with the light of genius; she was glorified by it.

Augusta was incapable of envy or jealousy, we know; but again a sadder pang came over her, and she sighed heavily; and she felt as if, at last, she understood what it was that was not in herself which Mr. Vavasour wanted.

She felt that in him, and in him alone, had she ever seen the same sort of radiance of inspiration before. She did not comprehend how it was; but it was an element of their own, in which they alone seemed fitted to live.

Poor Augusta! at that moment she might almost have been compared to the Peri in Moore's beautiful poem, who stood at the gates of Paradise—listening to the sweet sounds from within, and weeping.

Again—again—the depth and the breadth of that gulf which separated her from her lover yawned before her. She sat down behind the beautiful musician, rested her elbow upon a table, and covered her face with her hand.

And then, at length, the power of music passed over her soul, and for the first time, the wild and beautiful strains came pouring like the beams of the rising sun upon the statue of the Young Memnon, and awoke within the statue a voice.

The stream of sound seemed to purify as it passed—something of gross, something of earthly, seemed to pass away; and Augusta felt herself, for the first time, capable of higher and better things. Such are the influences of harmony.

As for Mr. O'Hara, in his passion for the art he almost forgot the artist. The moral power of music was almost lost upon him in the intense pleasure—but, *mere* pleasure—of the ear; his was but a pleasure of sense, after all.

These two powers of music are often confounded together, and it is for this reason that the art itself is so variously appreciated. The mere art of sound is inferior to all the others, and requiring little intellect, often rather tends to degrade than advance what is already possessed; but as a motive power, as a moral agent, as the awakener and refiner of all the nobler passions of the soul, music is unrivaled.

So she continued to play, for Augusta continued to listen; and as the soul of the impetuous king of old melted, and glowed, and softened, and fired responsive to the hand of the mighty master, as he swept his lyre, so her impressible imagination and her feeling heart answered to every strain as it arose.

She was awakened from this strange and new feeling by hearing Mr. O'Hara ask Miss Nevil to try a duet with him.

His fingers were actually trembling with impatience to be at the piano-forte too. Angela immediately complied with his request; the music-book was produced, and a splendid fantasia by Henri Herz laid open upon the desk.

They played it astonishingly well.

Nothing could be more brilliant than the manner in which all the intricacies of these beautifully complex and difficult passages were brought out. To the ear of the musician it must have afforded very great pleasure.

Not so to Augusta. Here she was quite at fault; no visions of the heart were summoned up by music of this recondite description. She soon rose, and walked away to the window; while the two continued to play. She was, however, in her abundant good nature, quite glad to see them so happy in this employment, though one in which she could not share. Nevertheless, her yawning fits came on again, as, sitting down upon the sofa by her mother, she took the Cuba dog upon her lap, stroked down his white silken hair, and kept asking, over and over again, whether it ever would clear up.

To which Mrs. Darby over and over again answered, "That she really did not know."

CHAPTER XL.

He joys in groves, and makes himself full blythe
With sundry flowers in wild fields gathered;
And perfect pleasure builds her joyous bowre,
Free from sad cares, that rich men's hearts devour.

SPENSER.

MISS DARBY was really very tolerant to the noise they were making with this new piano-forte, for to her it continued to be, what from the first opening of the fantasia by Herz it had begun to be, mere unintelligible noise.

The spirit of sound did not again visit her as it had done while Angela was giving forth her scraps and simple airs, because Mr. O'Hara was far too good a musician to please an untaught ear.

This fine spirit of sound (which word I use because I can think

of no better) comes not with ostentation. Where there is much preparation—where there is much display—where there is any fuss, this diviner essence escapes. At the Opera-house it is rarely present—at the concert-room or the fashionable gardens, scarcely ever. Those who seek such influences will find them lingering amid the Gothic pinnacles and vaulted roofs of the cathedral, or hanging upon the dying notes of a retreating band, when soldiers—when men, real breathing men—are marching away to suffer and to die; or amid the lovely glens of an oppressed or suffering country, faltering out a farewell to Lochaber, or mourning over the ruined Chevalier.

There was sadly too much bustle about Mr. O'Hara and his music, too much talk of this master and that; too much of difficult phrases and masterly passages, and so on.

Augusta walked about, and amused herself as well as she could, with watching him, and thinking how unlike he was to Vavasour, and how much pleasanter Mr. O'Hara was before this musical madness laid hold of him, and wishing to goodness it would be fair, and they might have something to do.

At last the clouds began to break.

Slowly and by degrees the heavens gathered up their curtains; the blue sky appeared; the white fleeces rolled gently toward the horizon; the sun broke forth in all his glory; and the piano-forte was thought of no more.

Angela, much as she had enjoyed this possession of the instrument, had, like Augusta, been rather disappointed in the pleasure she had expected from it.

She too had suffered from Mr. O'Hara's passion for what he called *good* music, and had been almost entirely occupied in unraveling the different compositions of others, rather than in exercising her own powers of composition.

She had found little opportunity for enjoying that sort of communion of the soul with her music—if I may use the somewhat affected expression—which was to her so delightful.

Still less had she ventured to allow herself in that which would have been so great an indulgence—repeating in solitude those few sacred passages which were associated with the last evening with Mr. Carteret.

Besides, she was not so absorbed with the pleasure as not to be growing anxious about her little charges, and extremely impatient to get them away from town; so she had shared, to its full extent, in Augusta's impatience for a change of weather.

She began to think it never would have done raining, and that

they never should get to the cottage, and begin to prepare a shelter for those poor little motherless babes. And though in the midst of a splendid composition, and very much to Mr. O'Hara's vexation, she sprang up from her piano-forte, and declared herself ready to set out as soon as ever Miss Darby, who was standing at the window watching the sky, announced that the weather had cleared, and that they might go.

Garden bonnets, shawls, and clogs were soon put on, and the young ladies set out, leaving Mr. O'Hara still busy hammering at the bass of a splendid concerto, and not at all sorry to escape, and have the pleasure of first exploring the cottage by themselves.

It was situated in a pretty little nook, this same lodge, where Augusta proposed to establish the children and their old nurse.

They crossed the park, and came to the only corner in the whole domain that could make the slightest pretension to the character either of the picturesque or of the beautiful. In this place the chalk had cropped out, as it is called, and had once probably been quarried, for the banks were broken into fantastic and precipitous masses, and were covered over with those knots of shrubbery, many-twisted bushes—those bunches of high grass and flowering weeds, which make old quarries of this description so pleasing. A little gurgling stream found its way at the foot of this series of small precipices, with a few scanty alders and willows hanging over it.

One of the park gates was here situated; the road approached winding by the side of this little rocky recess, at the opening of which lay the lodge.

It was a thatched and perfect cottage, of rather better appearance than lodges in the remoter and seldom visited portions of gentlemen's parks usually are: for it consisted of two stories, each story containing three rooms.

The windows were casements, and filled with my favorites, the small diamond panes; and the front, with its little peaks and points surmounted by crosses, was ornamented in a very pretty, rustic manner. Two or three tall ash-trees shaded it from behind; in front was a miniature garden, surrounded by small, pointed palings, which I love almost as well as I do diamond-paned casement windows.

It was, in truth, a lovely little spot; and Angela uttered an exclamation of surprise and delight, when a sudden turn of the road brought her in view of it.

"I thought you would like it," said Augusta; "and I am so glad

you do. It is really the only pretty thing on the whole ugly property, and were not I a great deal too commonplace and good-for-nothing to be romantic, I could find in my heart to come and live here with you myself, and perhaps persuade myself to leave this tiresome drawing, and even to sing about Damon and Chloe, I almost think; but how we shall find the inside, goodness knows, for I don't believe it has been inhabited these three years. It stands quite in an out-of-the-way part of the park, you see; nobody ever goes out at this gate scarcely. But I see old Prideaux has kept the house in pretty good repair; to do the old prig justice, he's an excellent steward."

She put a key into the little gate which led into the garden, and they entered.

It was all overgrown with untrimmed flowers, a very wilderness of a place; the rose-trees straggling in all directions; a marigold or a blue periwinkle might be seen peering from amid the wilderness of straggling creepers; here and there a late primrose peeping forth, or a bank of self-sown mignonnette.

The grass had not been mown upon the little grass-plot for a long time, and was growing rank and high, and filled with various weeds; and the clematis and wild briar, which had once been trained round the pretty windows, now hung loose and disorderly to the ground.

Angela looked round with an artist's pleasure upon this scene of vegetable desolation; the whole was, indeed, a picture, that to an eye such as hers was full of character, and whatever has character has charms.

Every thing pleased her—the quietness of the spot—the overhanging ash-trees—the clear, pebbly brook, which hurried swiftly by, gurgling as it went—the fantastic forms of vegetable life in all its exuberance, and the peaks of the pretty and half-buried cottage showing themselves between.

"How excessively pretty! how beautiful! how delightful!" she kept crying out; while Augusta was in the highest spirits, delighted herself with the prospect of so much business before her, and enchanted with the happiness that Angela expressed.

"We shall have a vast deal to do to get all this neat and tidy, shan't we? And I declare, when it is done, it will be the nicest thing in the world. Did you ever see any thing so pretty as that little cosy window, perfectly buried in the wild-rose branches? It's half a pity to make such a pretty slattern neat. I'll be bound, if Mr. Vavasour were here, he'd hate me worse than ever for even thinking of such a profanation: but he's just one of those rare spirits

who always sacrifice the actual to the ideal. But what are you thinking about, Angela, that you look so sad?"

She raised her head at this, and tried to smile and shake off her preoccupation.

She, too, had thought of *her* lover when she entered this pretty spot; she, too, had recollected that lost one; she, too, had thought how happy—how very happy in this sweet little solitude, with him, she might have been—would have been. It was just the life they should have loved—the life they should have led together. She stood musing, lost in sad rumination—her head bending down—her eyes turned to the earth.

I have seen her very picture, that is, if an engraving can be properly called such; and if you wish to see it too, it is in a print from Landseer, called "Cottage Industry." The young girl is the precise portrait of Angela.

"Ah, Angela!" said Augusta, "will you never tell me your secrets? I tell you mine. Nothing but being crossed in love makes a girl of your age and spirit look so sorrowful as you do sometimes. I have caught you at it once or twice already. You should put a spirit into it, girl, as I do; for I defy any one to be in a more mortifying situation than I am."

"Perhaps not; but there may be a more hopeless one. You forget"

"What a shame! I did indeed forget—I beg your pardon, Angela, with all my heart—I remember now you told me something about it once—what a brute beast I am! But I am so full of myself and my own troubles, that I forgot yours. But I hope, my dear," she said, with much serious kindness, taking her arm, "that you will try to forget what is past. It is not right, I believe—but, right or wrong, it's what nobody does but you—not to forget those who are gone away: we must live while we live, Angela."

"Yes," said Angela, "I know that; and I do live, and live happily. It comes across me now and then, that's all: it will do that, you know. Something in this place reminded me of one where I was very happy, in spite of many sorrows, and of many things that happened at that time, and other things: but it's over now. Shall we not go into the house? I long to see it."

"That's a good, brave girl!" said Augusta, affectionately; and, putting a second key into the oak door, it opened, and they entered the cottage.

Here all was in utter ruin: the house felt damp and unwholesome, and as if the fresh air had not been admitted for years; which

was, in truth, almost the case. The walls were covered with large dark patches made by the damp; the paper was peeling off in many places; the little grates and fire-irons were red with rust, as were the fastenings of the windows—the doors of cupboards stood wide open, or were falling off their hinges: it was a scene of the most complete dilapidation.

“Well, this is a place, to be sure!” cried Miss Darby; “and how dark and dismal it all looks, with the windows outside almost covered with leaves and bushes, and smelling so musty and damp! Pshaw! what a nasty place it looks! I am quite disappointed—aren’t you? ’Tis really horrid!”

“I don’t think it’s horrid at all,” said Angela, more accustomed to unpleasant sights and uncomfortable apartments than Miss Darby; “it only wants a little putting to rights. It will be charming when we have done a little to it, you will see.”

“Well, we shall have plenty to do; but first let us open the windows.”

This first step toward improvement was not effected without considerable difficulty; the rusty fastenings resisted the utmost force of both fair hands for some time; at length they yielded, and the sweet spring air shaking the garlands of sweet-briar that almost obscured the light, came with a pleasant freshness into the apartment.

The sun, too, burst suddenly forth, and brightened the little chamber, and the spirits of Augusta rose as she looked round.

“A little paper and paint, and we shall soon get all things tidy,” said she. “It’s really not so very bad after all. You know we are to do it ourselves,” she went on—“I have set my heart upon that. I hate leaving these things to mere workmen. Besides, we have not money enough just now to pay their enormous bills, and I do so hate that getting into debt. I would rather work my finger-ends off than see those horrid strips of paper covered all over with this and that; and know there is not the wherewith to pay, which we *never* have. I can’t see how it is, for we spend money enough, but we *never* seem any of us to have any.”

Thus she ran on, peeping into cupboards and peering into corners; now making a hasty exclamation, now uttering a petty oath, now humming the snatch of a song; while Angela followed her, so delighted with the plan, with the house, with her friend, with the idea of that active business of which she was so excessively fond, that her heart was really and literally too full for speech.

“I’ve hit upon it!” said Augusta at last, throwing herself down upon an old broken chair; while Angela found a seat upon a few

stray fagots. We shall want somebody to help us, and if I don't make that good-natured O'Hara come and work for us may I be shot."

"Young gentlemen of the present day are most often too fine to make themselves useful, I think," said Angela.

"Oh, not a bit of it! It's curious how fond every body is of a job of handiwork when they can get it. It's nothing but downright pride that makes people fond of sitting with their hands before them, depend upon it. If man was born to labor, be sure he was born to like it: and, that those who walk about the world with their eyes wide open, as I do, may easily see. But O'Hara's in for it with you, Angela; he'll be your obedient genius, task him as you please: see if he won't. Your Caliban I won't call him, and he's rather too substantial for an Ariel. However, I advise you to look sharp after your conquest, for he's a peer's son, and a very clever creature—if people had but wit enough to find it out—in spite of his odd, careless ways."

Angela smiled an incredulous smile, but only said—

"I hope nobody will ever fall in love with me, for I shall never do as much for them. But if Mr. O'Hara be in love with any one here, it is not with me, I feel sure."

"Now, that's so foolish!" said Augusta, impatiently,

Augusta, like many other kind-hearted people, was sure to be a good deal vexed when those she wanted to make happy couldn't, or, as she termed it, *wouldn't* be made happy in her own way.

"That is so foolish and provoking of you! I dare swear you'll go on with this lachrymose, philomel, romantic sort of constancy of yours, till you are grown as withered as a dead strawberry-leaf, and as musty as an old book. Do, for the love of heaven! put such nonsense out of your head. See what it has done for Joan Grant!"

"If it do no worse for me," said Angela, quietly, "I won't be inclined to quarrel with it. But, dear Miss Darby, do let me be happy on my own plan. You have made me inconceivably happy for the present moment. Don't vex and tease yourself by trying to fill a cup more than full. I will not be foolish, I promise you. Give me time. I am happy, you see, quite happy; only, indeed, I have lost my taste for lovers, and things which please girls at my age, that's all. And it's best as it is; for nobody would like their son to marry such a one as I am, and I would never marry unless they did. And so, you see, it is best as it is."

"Would you *never* marry any one without their parents' consent?" said Augusta, rising hastily from her seat, taking both her

hands, and looking earnestly into her eyes. "Say that again, Angela; are you quite sure you never would?"

"Quite sure!" said Angela, little aware that she had ever run the risk of being tried.

Augusta looked satisfied, dropped her head, and went to her place again.

They found no difficulty, certainly, in obtaining the assistance of Mr. O'Hara, who was enchanted at the idea of helping such agreeable laborers, and not a little glad to be relieved for a short space, at least, of the burden of his own time.

Paints, and papers, and fittings of various descriptions, were soon procured, and hammers, nails, brushes, and all the necessary tools brought down. They were not very accomplished work-people, to be sure, but they had time to rectify their own mistakes, and they improved very much as they went on.

And now see them all three working away together—so busy, and so happy.

While the two girls, in rough aprons, their sleeves well protected by huge cuffs of strong cloth, painted and papered, Mr. O'Hara hammered and joinered, and put doors in repair, and settled hinges, and planed floors.

Much was the laughing at their own awkwardness, and at all the minor misfortunes and difficulties that befell them in their undertaking. Now a pot of paint would be thrown over on the floor—now a strip of paper be pasted on upside down. They joked, and they laughed, and they labored; and Augusta forgot her anxieties, and Angela her recollections, and Mr. O'Hara grew pleasanter and pleasanter every day, and showed more and more of those talents and abilities with which he was gifted. They were astonished to find what an agreeable companion he could become.

The cottage, in the mean time, under their busy hands, assumed quite a charming appearance. Nice clean papers upon the walls; the wood painted *tant bien que mal* by these unpracticed artists—the color, to be sure, not very well *flatted*; the little casement-windows clean; the sun shining in between branches of sweet-briar and clematis, neatly trained and arranged—nothing could be nicer.

They were very proud of this creation of their hands, and received more pleasure from it than they would have done from the most finished performance of the most accomplished upholsterer.

I wish you could have seen Angela and the young lieutenant busy

cleaning windows together, face to face, laughing and joking: she thought he looked so pleasant and good-humored, and he thought her so extremely beautiful.

Augusta, whose wishes had taught her prudence, would at such times take care to be busy in the garden, digging, and raking, and pruning, and thus contrive to leave them quite to themselves.

She had thought it better to abstain from any further allusion to the subject. And Angela, who was not one of those young ladies who fancy they have made a serious conquest because a young man seems to admire them; but, on the contrary, was very much in the habit of disbelieving in the probability of her making serious conquests at all; went on most easily and cheerfully; and this very ease, added to the real liking she had for Mr. O'Hara, very much enhanced her charms.

Augusta would lift up her head from her work and watch them, and the more she watched the better pleased she was—it is so pleasant to see one's pet scheme upon the eve of accomplishment. The prospect it held out for Angela was an excellent one; and then, it is certain, comfort she enjoyed—great comfort—in the idea of Angela being safely engaged before Mr. Vavasour's return.

She was very silly upon this subject—she felt she was; she scolded herself for her absurdity: but, say what she would, it always came round to this—it would be very pleasant to have Angela engaged to Mr. O'Hara before *his* return.

“And really,” thought she, as she watched them, “it looks very like it.” There they both were, Mr. O'Hara and Angela, cleaning one of the windows; he perched upon a step-ladder, which was very shaky, while she was laughing at his awkward attempts to steady himself, and thinking how nice he looked there in a bower of sweet-briars, now in full flower, and with the virgin's bower trembling with its light branches all around him, and he thinking that when she laughs she is more lovely than ever; while Augusta turns away her head again, and rakes upon the little beds which they have cut in the grass-plot, where she has been sowing some annuals, and is wondering when Mr. Vavasour will arrive, and when he does, wishing he could break in upon them as at that very moment and see her thus simply employed, and thinking what his real feelings are, and hoping that he does love her truly in spite of all, and trying to believe that he must, and so she goes on—looking at the two at the window from time to time, and thinking of Mr. Vavasour, wondering where he can be, or what can have happened, that she has no tidings of him.

The Missendens were to leave Palermo immediately after the Darbys had quitted it, and thence sailing for Marseilles, cross France, and return by easy journeys to England. If they had been able to carry out their plan they ought very soon to arrive—ought by this time actually to have arrived, she thought.

Perhaps he would come down and surprise her there, without waiting to announce himself. She could not help wishing, as I said, that he might; she felt that she should have a better chance of interesting him thus occupied than she had ever had before; and that she should have deserved it better, and suited him better: for she felt a change was taking place in herself, and that she was beginning, in her turn, to feel that relish for retirement and that enjoyment in the simplicity of life, which is the almost unquestionable symptom of a genuine, honest passion.

“I think,” she said to Angela, as they were sitting one lovely morning upon a rustic seat they had made in the garden, and which, sheltered by a large plane-tree, was placed by the side of the bright and glittering little stream; “I think, Angela, I am becoming quite a new creature. There are some influences so unaccountably strong in their power over us—and the oddest thing is, that the influence you exercise over me, and that which the good-for-nothing Mr. Vavasour possesses, seem quite of the same nature—I am worth so much more when I am with either of you.”

She stopped a little, looked round her, smiled, and then went on.

“How very sweet all this is! how calm and quiet! how different from the bustling emptiness of the life we lead up at the house! One feels a better and a nobler creature, possessed with the sort of serious humor which this peaceful little solitude inspires. I begin to understand what hermits hoar in old times went to their mossy cells in search of. Do you understand what I mean?”

“Yes; I think I not only understand, but have felt what you mean. My life, for a very long time, has been a sorrowful and an anxious one, as you well know. I have been friendless, and often in such great straits, that I have felt forced to rest upon what was beyond myself, and have experienced so forcibly the power of the Unseen, that to desire to live in this sort of quiet communion with that power appears to me the most natural thing in the world. I should only be afraid of being too fond of indulging it, and forgetting my other duties.”

“Duties! How you have that word forever in your mouth, Angela! just like Joan Grant, you seem to live only for your duties.

Now, do you know the constant repetition of that word wearies me! I must live for some of life's pleasures, I am afraid, a little longer still, in spite of my fine talk just now," said she, laughing slightly. "And yet, oh Angela! I do talk and laugh, and seem to enjoy myself, but it is a miserable hypocrisy after all; for I have at this moment within me such a heavy, heavy heart!"

"Dear Augusta!"

"I talk of nothing else, I think of nothing else, I dream of nothing else; I pretend to enjoy pleasure, and I pretend to take interest in other things, but it's all shamming. And so, I dare say, you see very well. You can not be deceived in me, Angela. Oh!" she said, covering her face with her hand, and in a tone of mingled passion and despair, "it is not for human nature to know how I love him. He who reads the secrets of these poor weak hearts of ours, alone knows how deeply, how truly, how devotedly.

"And to live on in this dreadful, dreadful state of doubt—never to feel the slightest satisfaction—never to be able to look back upon one single passage of our mutual lives, since we were quite children, with perfect satisfaction! To feel sure that I am not *naturally* suited to him—that he is formed for those far, far above me; and yet to feel, that if I were to lose him it would be the utter destruction of me, body and soul—yes, soul as well as body, Angela—the next life as well as this! You can not think what a dreadful thing it is. I have sometimes felt as if I were suspended over an abyss, hanging by a single hair, which a mere breath might sever, and plunge me into the everlasting darkness. Oh . . . !"

"My dear, dear Augusta! do not—do not—talk in this wild, shocking manner! The fate of one human creature is never thus placed in the hands of another. Believe it, dear Miss Darby, we are all, if we will, masters of our own destiny, though at times it is a very hard strife and struggle to maintain that mastery, I know."

"But I can not struggle without a motive, and the terrible thing is that Mr. Vavasour is my only motive—except perhaps, indeed, this new feeling of my love for you," said she, correcting herself: "that I own, is a motive in itself. But do you know, Angela, till I knew you, I never, I believe, since I first knew right from wrong, did any thing, however small, which I thought right without a reference to him? and even now, I feel as if, much as I love you, to deserve his approbation by being good and useful was the secret reward of all my painting and papering."

"I can not think," she went on, "what there is about him which exercises such a strong moral influence—as you, who use big words

in their right sense, would call it—for I don't know that he's particularly good himself—only he never will do any thing that he thinks in the least wrong, let one plague him ever so; and he has such high, serious views of things, so totally unlike all I have ever been used to find in any one else."

"Ah, that's it!" said Angela; "that's it! I knew that feeling so well: not that I did not live with very good, with excellent people; but there was something about *him*—I can no more tell than you can, Augusta, what it was—some men seem scarcely as if they were of the same race with other men. But you are happier than I am, dearest Miss Darby; life and hope are before *you*."

"I would be content were he in his grave, so I was sure that he had ever loved me!" said Augusta, gloomily.

"And I," said Angela, "feel—but it is a false and foolish feeling—that I could be content to believe him another's, might I but see him once—only once—once more!"

CHAPTER XLI.

But the small birds in the wide boughs embowering,
Chaunted their sundry tunes with sweet consent;
And under them a silver stream, forth pouring
His trickling streams, a gentle murmur sent.

SPENSER.

THE cottage was now quite ready. Angela, by Miss Darby's desire, wrote to Nurse to bring down the children, who in due time arrived by the coach, and, much to the good old woman's satisfaction, took possession of their charming little abode.

Here was a new source of interest opened for all parties. Miss Darby was very much pleased at witnessing the great happiness she had been the means of bestowing; and as for Angela, she had now abundance of employment of the kind most delightful to her.

This little lodge soon became to her as her real settled home. There her little children dwelt, and there her simple plan of life could be carried out. The few books she possessed were soon arranged in a room which she had appropriated to herself; and she busily employed the precious moments of this interval of leisure in preparing herself for future usefulness.

The little ones would soon require an education which it would be utterly beyond her present means to provide for them : for this, as for every thing else, they must look alone to her.

It is true she might, perhaps, through her kind, influential friends, obtain for the boys a nomination to some of the great public schools; but this was a vague and uncertain hope, and she determined, as far as in her lay, to provide the means of preparing them in some degree herself at home. So she set about to teach herself Latin, in hopes to be able to assist her little boys in acquiring the rudiments, at least, of this indispensable branch of education.

It was a girlish idea, perhaps, and every body will think she could not help her little boys much ; but it was the natural result of an ardent and generous mind, intent upon being of service to these unfortunates in every possible, and perhaps more than in every possible way.

And so thus their lives passed on, and the summer was fast fleeting away.

It was Angela's custom to rise very early and walk down to her cottage, while Augusta was still in bed. She had time in the two hours thus obtained to read prayers to her little family, to inspect the children's affairs, to hear a few early lessons, and to return for Mrs. Darby's ten o'clock breakfast.

She would come in and sit down after her early walk, looking so fresh and so cheerful that it was a pleasure merely to behold her ; and not only Mr. O'Hara and Augusta, but Mr. and Mrs. Darby themselves, little as they were in the habit of indulging these kinds of affections, were becoming quite fond of her.

Her time after breakfast was devoted to her friend.

The drawing-lessons sometimes went on, sometimes not ; but there was gardening, and walking, and talking ever to be done.

After luncheon, Miss Darby usually rode out with her father and Mr. O'Hara, or other gentlemen who might be staying in the house, and Angela was again at liberty to return to her little pupils.

Then she taught the children again, and chatted with and comforted old Nurse, who every day grew crosser and more in need of comforting. She would sit by the hour endeavoring to please and amuse the old woman while she cut out and arranged the children's clothes, and prepared needlework to take back with her, to employ the evening at the Hall.

When the weather was fine, as it was now, she sat out of doors, or played with the little children, exerting herself in every way to promote their happiness, improve their minds, and cultivate their young hearts and dispositions. So the time would be employed till it struck

five, and then, serene and cheerful, her heart warmed with that best, most grateful cordial—a conscience satisfied and at rest; having tenderly kissed these little creatures, who hung to her dress and clung about her with the fondest love, and promised, if they would be good and let her go now, she would come again to-morrow; this young matron of twenty, her duties all discharged, would walk home across the park alone—but not alone—under that blue, serene sky, image of the heaven within her breast, her heart filled with the mysterious influences of that unseen world in which her treasure lay.

She was happy—entirely, if not joyously happy.

The solemn shadows of the past seemed to throw only a softening shade upon her present life, rendering it more touching and more dear.

And so she wended her way toward the heaven where all were to be restored whom she had loved and lost—guided on her path by that deep sense of duty with which Augusta had been inclined to quarrel, but which she was beginning to learn to love for Angela's sake.

Angela had gone down to her cottage; she sat there under the plane-tree, employed at her needle, while two of the little children were sailing their boats of pink, yellow, and purple flower-leaves upon the stream, and old Nurse and baby were toddling at some distance up and down together—when the little garden-gate opened, and, at a most unusual time of day, Augusta made her appearance.

She came up hastily, a letter in her hand, her color high, and her eyes sparkling.

“I have got it at last!” she cried out, as she opened the garden-gate; “there is the letter; it is arrived at last. They are coming home,” she went on, sitting down upon the bench by Angela's side, “and will be in London in a few days. This letter comes from Paris. Nay, you are to read it, child. I should think there were no secrets between you and me now. It's not from *him*—oh, no, catch him writing to *me*!—but it's from his mother, and that's as good, I expect, and better; for Lady Missenden hates writing, and never puts pen to paper if she can possibly help it. It's short and sweet, isn't it?”

She gave the letter to Angela, threw her arm round her shoulder, and read over her—she could not read it too often.

“DEAREST AUGUSTA,

“Lord Missenden has been very ill again, and we have been detained all this time at Marseilles. It was no use writing—which

you know I hate—till I had something certain to tell; no news is good news, every body knows: and we expected daily to be released and to set out again. *Some* of us, I can assure you, have borne this last delay much more impatiently than we did the sojourn at Palermo; for there, you know, a certain cruel young lady was still with us. I never saw a creature in such a fidget to get on as Vavasour was at Marseilles; it really was piteous. He is grown dreadful bad, I can tell you—not in the least cured of his sighing, but a great deal worse, if possible; and he seems quite to have lost the power of amusing himself. Would you believe it? he has hardly touched a pencil since we left Palermo! He does not, as he used to do, go about seeing things and collecting information. No, he seems to have become wholly listless and indifferent, and to care for nothing but getting to England. In short, my dear, I can tell you he is in a very bad way; and did I not know that there is a certain fair plant flourishing in his own country, which possesses qualities sovereign for the remedy of disorders such as he is affected with, I should think he was in a very dangerous state, and really be quite unhappy about it. We got to Paris by what my young gentleman seemed to think quite unnecessarily slow journeys, but here we are.

“He is now out walking in the Champs Elysées. quite alone, if you will believe me; for he mopes dreadfully, and shuns all his acquaintance—you know his sulky ways of old. However, we shall be in London in ten days at farthest, I trust, and then I shall either find Mrs. Darby in Green-street, or you will be down in Cambridgeshire; in which latter case I shall pack him off without loss of time, and depend upon it, in spite of the curious airs he used to affect at Palermo, not more to my satisfaction than his, he has shown plain enough, at last, that he can not exist without you; so pray make up your mind to be very humane and forgiving, and to forget old grievances, and receive the poor fellow as a saint in heaven should do one who has passed through purgatory.

“Kind regards, &c., to your mother. Ever my beloved and sweetest Augusta's affectionate friend,

“ELEANOR MISSENDEN.”

“Well, what do you think of that?” said Augusta, her face glowing with a delight she did not attempt to conceal.

“Is not he the strangest, most unaccountable of mortals? If you had but seen him at Palermo—I can hardly help laughing now when I think of it—so *excessively* tiresome—and always drawing.

and going about sight-hunting, as if he could scarcely endure one's company—and then to be in such a fuss to come to England as soon as one is gone! Did you ever hear of any thing so silly?"

"I am so very, very glad!" was Angela's answer, spoken from her heart, as she folded up the letter, and returned it to her friend;—"so very glad! And now you will be so much happier; your suspense, at least—that horrid suspense!—must be over: you will soon meet. I congratulate you with my whole heart. Dear Augusta, you are going at last to be happy;" and she took up her hand and kissed it.

"Oh!" cried Augusta, giving way at last to the natural course of her feelings; the tears, true tears of honest joy, springing into her eyes, "why should I affect disguises before you? why should I have concealment with you, dear, kind Angela, my true friend? You can not conceive how happy I am. I am not ashamed to own it; I never believed he cared for me before—I would have been grateful for the slightest possible sign of interest and affection; and now, to have these showered upon me! Who would have thought—who could have thought, that he cared so much about me? But he never can do any thing like other men, and that it is which makes him, I believe, so excessively interesting to me. Those contradictions in him keep me ever awake—those willful, original ways of his. You can conceive nothing more provoking—more despairingly provoking; and yet, at the same time, so strangely charming. Let me look at the letter again—let us read it together again," she went on, unfolding the letter, and again with her arm over Angela's shoulder holding it so that they could read it together.

"In what terms she writes! why, it's like the description of a love-sick swain in a novel, isn't it?" laughing. "Dear, dear Vavasour! so woe-begone—so *bad*! as she says. After all, dear fellow, I could find in my heart to pay you back a little cruelty for the horrid frights you have often put me into. You never saw such a barbarian as he was; he used to put me in mind of Hypolitus, in that extraordinary play of Racine's. I was never quite as bad as Phédre, mind. And now, don't you think, Angela dear, that if I like I have a *right* to plague him in my turn? I used to try to plague him, sometimes, at Palermo; but my heart was sore, it wouldn't do then: but now I would do it so prettily! I must plague him a bit—must I not, Angela?"

Angela turned up her eyes, filled with a wondering but somewhat mournful expression. Good, generous girl, she could and

she did rejoice—truly rejoice, in her friend's happiness; but the contrast with her own desolation would make itself felt. *Her* lover was about to return, devoted and fond, to her feet. But where was *he*? where was her Carteret? Cut off in his bloom—vanished into darkness—lost forever!

It was natural that in such a moment she should wonder that any thing but the warm exchange of hearts, the almost solemn rapture of the moment of reunion, should be thought of.

"Plague him!" she said, innocently. "You can never think of plaguing him at such a moment as that?"

"You think it will be a happy moment, do you then, pretty one?"

"A moment of *such* joy!" said Angela, in a low, trembling voice.

"What an ungenerous, selfish wretch I am," cried Augusta, as if recollecting herself, "to *parade* my happiness before you in this hateful manner! I don't deserve to be happy—I know I don't, Angela—to forget you at such a time! But do forgive me; I could not help it: I ought not to have said one word about it."

"Oh, don't say so—don't say so!" was Angela's reply, turning to her, and embracing her affectionately. "I should be the most selfish, most ungenerous creature in the universe, if I could not rejoice heartily, heartily, in your happiness. You who have been such a friend to me! It was I who was selfish at that moment. Don't hide your feelings from me, Augusta; I rejoice warmly, truly, fervently, in your happiness. Let me hear it—let me see it—it does me good to see it. I can not tell you how much I love you, dear, honored Miss Darby."

Augusta kissed her cheek with more serious affection than she had ever displayed, or, perhaps, felt before.

"Yours is a heart of gold, Angela!" was all she said.

I have been rather long, and perhaps a little tedious, in describing the circumstances from which that strong affection took rise, which by this time united these two young women in a friendship, as different in its strength and truth from that ordinarily dignified with this name by young ladies, as these two young women were unlike ordinary young ladies.

The subject is not a particularly exciting one—the effects of daily reciprocal acts of affection and kindness are delicate to trace and difficult to make interesting. I crave your pardon if, as I fear, I may not have succeeded in the picture I wished to represent, and now take leave to pass on to other matters.

CHAPTER XLII.

Thus, there he waited until eventide,
Yet living creature none he saw appear;
And now sad shadow gon the world to hide.

Faëry Queen.

As I have before related, Mr. and Mrs. Whitwell had left the Great Ash Farm, the scene of Angela's early adventures, not very long after her departure from that place.

Every thing had been sold up, and new tenants established there, and under that strange concatenation of human affairs which people are accustomed lightly to call "destiny," this change in their position exercised a very remarkable influence over the fate of one, at that time residing in a distant country. The Lord of Sherington, like most other lords and gentlemen of landed property, had, it seems, retained a pretty considerable portion of land near that seat in his own hands; and had, like the rest of the world, spent a vast deal of money, at one time or other of his life, in farming.

Gentlemen's farming.

An expression almost taken of course to imply time wasted, capital misapplied, money lost, and difficulties terribly involving—which is a pity, for there can not be a more rational, scarcely a more agreeable exercise of the faculties of men of the ordinary stamp, than that of this same farming; so it really be the exercise of those faculties, which the pursuit in its true form is calculated to call forth, instead of being, what it too often is, the mere pastime of the indolent—the mere pretense of employment; and only one other form of the universal attempt to secure the good things of this life without paying the required price for them. An attempt, in short, to unite the interest of real business with the trifling of mere pleasure; in other words, to appropriate the amusement to one's self and leave all the toil to others.

So its importance be regarded in its true light, and so it be well and wisely done, I know not a better school for the mind. There are few modes of employment better suited to occupy that time which hangs heavy upon the hands of so many men of fortune, among the numbers wanting talents, inclination, or opportunity, to take a part in public affairs; and I think one of the best and most

encouraging features in the character of an English gentleman is the almost universal passion for the subject.

Forgive this little digression while upon the fascinating theme. I might have spared my remarks; for it is my happiness to believe, that the persuasion that to *play* at farming won't do, is becoming so general, that in a few years the old-fashioned gentleman-farmer will have become a character obsolete.

The Lord of Sherington, however, you may be sure, with his habits, was an example in perfection of the exploded gentleman-farmer of the old school.

Lavish and wasteful, profligate and careless, indolent and negligent—he was one who would scarcely have taken the trouble to stoop to pick up a purse of gold, had it lain in his way.

Yet, like other indolent people, fond of busy idleness, he had spent immense sums upon his model-farms, as he had spent immense sums upon every thing else; for he was, in fact, in these things, a mere child, always wanting new playthings. New breeds of cattle, new agricultural machines and implements, were to be bought, new experiments to be tried, at any expense; and when the machine was purchased, or the experiment in progress, where was the master's eye to estimate the advantages of the one or to direct the coming out of the other? He was probably gone before the new purchases, obtained at so much cost, had arrived—gone before the experiment, carried out at so much expense, was half completed—gone to Newmarket, to Doncaster, to Paris, to Rome, to any place upon earth but the one where he ought to have been found—to any place where the fancy of the moment might carry him. And at Palermo, as we have seen, he fell into this long, tedious illness, which, rendering him utterly and hopelessly helpless, put an end to his restless idleness forever.

Well, his steward had long found it extremely difficult to provide the means of answering the exorbitant drains upon him, which the Lord of Sherington's habits occasioned; and he, as he was really an honest, painstaking Scotchman, and quite above having recourse to the usual expedients in such cases, found himself obliged to resort to every plan he could devise for diminishing expenses at home, in order to provide money to send abroad; so, among other things, it struck him that this Home Farm, being a source of very great and useless expense, it would be much better to let it in its improved state to some good tenant, who would pay his rent regularly.

It so chanced, that Mr. Whitwell and his stirring wife—unquestionably very good and experienced farmers, were at that very time

quitting the Great Ash Farm; the steward heard of it, applied to them, and a bargain was made; and thus our old friend Mrs. Whitwell, leaving that obscure village and secluded part of the country, in which she had been living when first we became acquainted with her, found herself, very much to her own satisfaction, established in the more lively and sociable situation of tenant of the Home Farm at Sherington.

The situation was very particularly cheerful, for the homestead was situated close by the park, and at that side of it where the house stood, so that it was at most not half-a-mile's walk from the mansion itself, the steward's house, the gardener's, the stables, &c.; quite a little ready-made society was there to be found.

Mr. Whitwell had made a very good bargain for himself with the steward, be it known, but upon one condition—he was only tenant-at-will, Mr. Light not being so fond of long leases as many people, nowadays, are found to be. He still believed, did Mr. Light, in the possibility of there being bad tenants as well as bad landlords, however incredible such facts may appear to many who write upon the subject. And he still thought, that as it must ever be the interest of a bad tenant to stick to a good landlord, and of a landlord to stick to a good tenant, long leases might sometimes enable the bad tenant to set his landlord at defiance, and keep possession of another man's land till he ruined it, without materially adding to the security of those whose conduct was their best security.

And so Mr. Light, though he never objected to long leases with well-trying tenants, when they cared to have them, which they seldom did, was rather shy of granting them to strangers.

Therefore, Mr. Whitwell, in spite of his good reputation, was at present only a tenant-at-will.

I must add, likewise, that it was very possible that the Lord of Sherington, if ever he recovered his health and returned to England, might wish to resume possession of his pet model-farm.

Mr. and Mrs. Whitwell, however, found, what is usually found by those who become tenants of this species of farms, that though an immensity of money had been wasted and misapplied, and no adequate return upon the capital expended was to be looked for, yet, that where such a vast deal had been spent, a good deal had necessarily been done, and that more than a readily calculable value had been added to the land: in short, that they had made a very good bargain. And Mrs. Whitwell, who was as busy and intriguing a woman, in her way, as ever made mischief in a court or a cabinet, determined to leave no stone unturned to curry favor at the great

house, and at the steward's house, and at every place where favor could be curried, while good, honest, and rather stolid Mr. Whitwell, was busy with his ploughs and his scarifiers.

Mr. Light was a sensible man, and a worthy man; but alas! like many other sensible and worthy men, was cursed with a sad, silly wife, of whom, like many other sensible and worthy men who might be named, he was very particularly and weakly fond; and the pretty gossip, like many other pretty gossips in other grades of life, used to get possession of more of her husband's secrets than he ought to have intrusted to her; and, having got possession of them, according to the usual custom of those of her class, was in the habit of retailing them to dear friends, under *strict injunctions to secrecy*—injunctions not very likely to be kept by those much less interested in preserving secrecy than herself.

Mrs. Whitwell did not dislike gossip when work was done; nay, her greatest relaxation was to sit over her tea, and talk and think ill of her neighbors. Not having lived much in the great world, she was more particularly anxious about the doings of the great, and no story that Mrs. Light could retail from the mansion-house but found in her a most attentive listener.

And many were the tales, true or false, to which she listened.

She heard of my lord's extravagance, and of my lady's anxieties; and of the only son and heir, and of his various accomplishments, and of his many oddities. His skill in sketching, and his love of long walks; his excursions nobody knew where, with little baskets of niceties from the housekeeper's room, which baskets always came back empty; height, figure, color of the eyes, color of the hair, all were described in detail, and all tallied. Dates, absences, all agreed. The mysterious visitor of the Great Ash Farm stood confessed.

And now Mrs. Whitwell began to turn the matter over anxiously in her thoughts. With the suspicion common to low and vulgar minds, she had always distrusted the views of the young artist; but now she thought herself certain no good to Angela could have been designed, and the anxiety she felt lest she herself might some way or other become entangled in an affair unpalatable to her present landlord and his lady, and the measures she consequently resolved to adopt, should Mr. Carteret return, were palliated to her conscience by the belief that she would thus effectually place the young lady out of the reach of temptation and danger, while she provided for her own security against possible inconvenience or blame.

Having ascertained—as you, perhaps, trusting to the experience

of Crabbe, have long ago surmised, that however securely dead a character may, as you think, be, even if you have seen him coffined, he is sure to appear again ; dear little Paul Dombey, whose decease threw a nation into mourning, being alone a regretted exception—that Mr. Carteret was living, she determined to put an effectual stop to the affair.

Remotely as she was connected with it, she thought it might involve her in blame, and she dreaded lest the terrible Lady of Sherington, whom she heard every one mention with awe, might resent any part she might take in renewing the correspondence between the two young people, which accident had so fortunately interrupted.

The most obvious method which suggests itself to cowardly or unprincipled people to extricate themselves from a difficulty, is usually the sacrifice of truth. A conscientious regard to truth may almost be called an epitome of the other virtues, as a neglect of it is certain to accompany other vices. Mrs. Whitwell had very little goodness of any kind about her, and any thing like a conscientious feeling, as regarded truth, was far above her standard : she did not want a certain quickness and invention, and she made up her mind what she would do as soon as she heard that Mr. Carteret was expected to return to England.

It was a fine evening in October when a young man, with a knapsack at his back, stood looking over the small iron gate which still formed the entrance to the garden of the Great Ash Farm, his eyes wandering upon all sides, as if in search of something.

He had stood thus, leaning against the gate a little while, as if he were endeavoring to discover, before he entered, whether there were any people or any dogs about—just as some ill-disposed person, some thief or marauder, might have done ; but seeing nothing (for Nero, faithful guardian, was basking in the sun at the Home Farm at Sherington), he, with a hand which trembled considerably, undid the secret spring that fastened the gate, and walking up that gravel walk, which I shall be very much mortified if you have forgotten, approached the house.

All was perfectly still and quiet. He passed along the well-known walk, turned the corner toward the orchard, and found himself in front of the two large walnut-trees, still standing in all their leafy magnificence.

There they stood in all the fullness of their autumn tints ; their large pendent branches gently swinging up and down in the evening

wind, the sinking sun casting their long shadows upon the grass below, just as he had seen them so often before, in days that, his heart whispered, would never be forgotten.

Some late marigolds and nasturtiums were still to be seen in the rough, untrimmed borders; the roses and honeysuckles were hanging in long, neglected streamers over the windows. Not a sign of inhabitant was to be seen; every casement and shutter, where there were shutters, was closed; the whole was wrapped in total melancholy silence.

The traveler stopped and listened, as if he had hoped to catch voices proceeding from within—perhaps the merry laugh of children, or the tones of one reading quietly; but in vain. He approached the glass-door which led to what had once been the dining-room, and tried it, but it was locked; and the green moss which began to cover the door-steps, and the branches which hung low over the porch, proved that no one had passed that way for some time. Every thing told the tale of long desertion, and bore that mournful air of neglect which characterizes uninhabited houses. It was evident they had all been gone long ago.

Margaret, Angela, old Nurse, the children, where were they?

But he did not turn away and leave the spot immediately, as a mere casual visitor might have done. He went down the steps; he went up again, and again tried the door. He looked in through the windows—all within was desolate and cold; all without, silent and deserted. He sat down upon the steps, covered his face with his hands, and visions of that sweet evening, that last evening, when he had declared his love, and felt and found a return; that evening, with all its melancholy presentiments, all its sadness, and all its sweetness, passed over him. Then he got up and walked about a little under the walnut-trees; then he sat down upon a rustic seat, which still stood beneath one of them; then he pulled off a leaf from one of the low, hanging boughs, and put it into his bosom; then he walked around the walk under the shrubbery; and then, having once more cast a longing, lingering look behind him, he quitted the orchard by the path round the corner, and walked away slowly through the garden, closing the gate carefully after him.

He made his way to the fold-yard. It was not now, as he had once known it, surrounded with the various noises of men, and cattle, and horses, and echoing with the sounds of industry; a boy or two, and a carter or herd, here and there, were alone to be found lingering about.

Voices were, however, to be heard from a distant yard, where the master was employed superintending the loading of some carts with corn, that were to proceed early in the morning to a distant market, but that was all. He went up to the kitchen door, and knocked.

It was opened by a young woman, but a total stranger. Kitty, Jenny, Sally, his old acquaintance, were all gone.

"Is Mrs. Whitwell at home? I wish to speak to Mrs. Whitwell," said the stranger.

"Bless you!—Mrs. Whitwell, sir? Why she's been gone from here last Friday fortnight is a twelvemonth!"

"Gone away! Did you say she was gone away? Where to? She is still living, surely?"

"I'm sure I know nothing about it," answered the girl, very unceremoniously; for our traveler was, as usual, rather too happy in his disguises, and passed for a vagabond without difficulty. "But I'm left here to take care of the house; so please stand out of the doorway, and let me shut it again."

"Where is your present mistress?"

"Ill in bed."

"And your master?"

"In the other yard, I reckon."

The yard she spoke of was separated by a line of outbuildings from this side of the house, and in it stood the granary where the farmer's wealth was deposited. He was standing among a number of laborers busily and happily engaged—while the heavy sacks were being carried down the granary steps upon men's shoulders, and safely deposited in the carts—meting out an allowance of ale among them. His mind was full of the present interesting scene, and he had neither time nor attention to bestow upon a sun-burned traveler; who, however, coming up without the usual modest hesitation of a wayfarer of his humble appearance, craved his attention for a few moments.

"What's your business, man? Don't you see I'm busy now? Call again another time, can't you?"

"I only want to speak three words with you," said the stranger; "but I am pressed for time. I am on a journey, and shall not be in this neighborhood again for years, perhaps?"

"Well! speak on."

"Can you tell me what has become of the people who lived here before you?—Whitwell, their name was."

"That I can't," said the farmer. "This is an out-of-the-way

place. We don't deal much in news here. No, I never heard what has become of them."

"That is very distressing!" said the young man, with a look of perplexity and disappointment; "but perhaps some of your laborers—you must have some who worked under him—may know?"

"Maybe so," said the farmer, who was in a good humor, as men are whose fields have returned them six quarters to the acre, and who are sending their corn to market. "Here, Tom the carter. You lived with Job Whitwell, did you not? Have you ever heard what became of him after he left the country?"

"Ay, that have I," said Tom. "He went to live as tenant with old Lord What's-his-name, of Sherington, there ayont the hill. I know it, because Jerry at the Rose and Crown lost some of the goodwoman's things in his'n cart, which she'd left with the landlady o' th' Rose and Crown for safety. He said he never see'd such a road in all his days as that to Sherington. The ruts were above the axle-tree. Never heerd of such lanes! It took him till almost dark to get there; for it's ten miles by the road, he says, he verily believes: but there's a shorter way over the fields as I've heerd tell, though I can't say as ever I tried it."

"Tenant with the old lord!" said the stranger. "Pray tell me of which farm. Whitestone, or the Oakhouse, or the Willowspars, or?"

"You seem to know the names of the old lord's farms pretty well!" said Tom; "better nor any of we do here: for it's quite out of our beat. We none of us ever goes to the other side o' th' hills, you see. But it strikes me, that I heard at the Rose and Crown that what Whitwell had taken into was the Home Farm; and a rare bargain, some of them were saying, he had got of it."

"Thank you—Good night!" putting a crown into his hand, and walking away.

"My faith, Tom!" said a fellow-laborer, "but you do sell that gammon of yours at a rare price! Now, who'd ha' thought that long tongue and those ass's ears of yours would ever have earned you half a week's wages? And where did you learn all that you prated about?"

"Nothing like getting information whenever you can," said Tom, with dignity. "I never mis-notices any thing, and I never forgets what I notices; and I learned all that talk going on at the Rose and Crown, near, it maybe, a twelvemonth ago; but here it's all fixed as fast as the church tower: nothing ever gets out of this noddle that's once been there; and many's the odd shilling I've got for it," added

Tom; proud of that power of memory, which has ministered to the fortunes of many a greater than he.

“But I wonder what way that chap’s a-going? Holla! I may as well give him a little of my geography for his crown. Holla there! which way are you a-going? That’s not the way to Sherington!”

The stranger looked back, but, in spite of Tom’s vociferations and assurances that he was in the wrong road, pursued his way. He leaped over the stile, entered the well-known fields, and was soon lost to sight.

The men returned to their occupations, and even Tom seemed to forget him.

The sun was setting in the west, in one magnificent blaze of crimson purple and lovely sea-green gold; the birds were twittering their obscure autumn song, and the rooks were sweeping across the sky to their distant homes, as the stranger, having crossed the ridge, and pursued the well-known path along the fields, sat down upon a stile, and watched the glorious orb sink stately to his curtained rest behind the rising clouds.

He sat there looking upon that lordly demesne of his fathers, which lay stretched beneath his feet, and meditating sadly upon all the hopes and anticipations of happiness with which he had once been filled while sitting in that very place, and while his sweet romance of love was beginning. He pondered upon the unaccountable silence which had succeeded to a tale full of so much affection and apparent truth; upon the impossibility he had found it, during his absence, to obtain the least indication as to what had become of them; and he recurred with pain to the harassing feelings of impatience with which he had fretted against the obstacles which prevented his return to his own country, and had waited till those obstacles were removed, and he allowed to revisit the spot. Too late, perhaps, and in vain, after all.

Then he went over the circumstances of his hasty departure; thought of the letter he had sent at the moment of his setting out—of the money he had inclosed in it, which now he began to fear she could never have received; and then he almost shuddered at the idea of what, in their destitution, they might have all suffered. He contrasted the melancholy silence of the deserted garden and orchard which he had visited that evening with the tranquil Sabbath scene of the last tender evening. Again he heard that sweet voice; again his heart fluttered and beat as when she sang that last evening hymn; and again he looked down upon the splendid mansion of his

forefathers, where he had thought to have finally installed his beautiful treasure.

He would not descend the hill till it was nearly dark, for he had determined not to make himself known. And now the sun is gone, and twilight slowly steals over the landscape. First, the distant hills fade into indistinctness; then the woods and lawns become but as shadows; gradually the last tinge of red upon the wide-spread lake disappears. He descends the hill, and makes his way to the Home Farm.

The door was closed; the bright light of the kitchen fire, at which supper was preparing, gleamed through the casement: he cast a glance in; there was no mistaking the figure standing over the fire—it was Mrs. Whitwell, bustling and busy as ever.

He stepped back, drew a checked handkerchief out of his pocket, tied it so as to nearly muffle up his chin, pulled his traveling-cap over his face, approached the door, and knocked.

Mrs. Whitwell herself opened it.

“Who’s there?” in the usual sharp, harsh tone. “What do you want at this time of night? If you’ve business with Mr. Whitwell, call again to-morrow. He’s busy in the rickyard now.”

“My business is with you.”

He forgot that he ought to have disguised his voice; the tone, the look—something about him was not to be mistaken; she knew him in a moment.

“You’re a perfect, entire stranger to me,” she accordingly said. “I never saw you, as I know, before. What business can you have with me?”

“My business is only to make a short inquiry. I have reason for wanting to learn what is become of some friends of mine that lodged with you about twelve months ago, when you lived at the Great Ash Farm, near Brandling,” said he.

“Oh, ho! say you so! Very well, my young gentleman,” thought Mrs. Whitwell to herself; “but I’m up to you now!”

“About them?” said she, with a look of indifference, perfectly well assumed. “Oh, they’ve all left this part of the country long ago!”

“Pray tell me why they went—where they are gone to—what is become of them.”

“Why, have you never heard any thing of them since?” began Mrs. Whitwell. The “since” might have betrayed her knowledge of the stranger, had he not been too much absorbed with his own anxieties to attend to it.

"Not one word; not one syllable."

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Whitwell, "then pray step in, and I'll tell you all I know about them."

"I would rather not step in," said he, afraid of being recognized by some member of the family. "What I have to ask will soon be answered. What is become of them all?"

"Captain Nevil's family, I presume it is that you mean, sir?" Mrs. Whitwell continued, with considerably more respect in her manner to the son of her landlord, though as yet unavowed, than had ever characterized her proceedings with regard to the young unknown artist.

"Why, sir, the captain, as I dare say you know, died, not very long after they all came there, of a consumption; and then poor Mrs. Nevil; and after that she, poor thing, was laid in the churchyard, and Miss Angela and the children were left alone, who should arrive but a fine young spark of an officer, a proper young man as ever you saw, and he took Miss Angela and the children away: and I heard no more of them, except by one letter that I had from old Mrs. Nurse; for I couldn't but feel anxious, not liking to see so young a lady go off that fashion with a smart young officer; and it told me that they were safely married, bans spoken and all, and were gone to the Indies, and the children with them: which gave me great satisfaction to hear, poor young thing! as I'm quite sure it will do you, sir, if you are a real friend of hers."

"Stay!" turning her back upon him. "Perhaps you'd like to see Mrs. Nurse's letter. I kept it by me for some time. I was so glad to hear the young gentleman and lady were safe married, for they looked mighty loving when they went away."

"I wonder where I can have put it!" Mrs. Whitwell kept running on, pretending to rummage in the drawers of her dresser: where it would seem, like many other good housewives that I have known, she let all her papers of importance tumble about to take their chance. She continued her pretended search for some time. She was not likely to receive any interruption from him.

She had scarcely concluded her search before he had shrunk back from the door; and he now stood, his face averted and covered with his hand, supporting himself against the wall of the house.

At length Mrs. Whitwell returned to the door. She made her own remarks upon what she saw; but took care to appear not to have taken the slightest notice of his emotion.

"I can't think what's become of the letter," said she. "I must have flung it into the fire last time, I emptied my drawers."

"It's no matter," said the young man in a low hurried voice, and without turning his face toward her: "you are certain of the fact, that is enough."

He sank down upon a low bench by the door; he seemed to breathe with difficulty.

"Certain of my facts! ay, to be sure," reiterated Mrs. Whitwell, "there's no doubt of my facts; and I must say I, for one, was glad to hear all was safe and right, for they seemed mighty loving when they went away."

"You need tell me no more," said he, hastily rising.

And, without even bidding her good evening, he walked away.

CHAPTER XLIII.

But where shall I, in all antiquity.
So fair a pattern find?

ANGELA was sitting quietly in her room, engaged at her drawing, when the door opened, and Augusta, with a face of the greatest agitation, the color crimsoning her cheeks, and her eyes gleaming, came in.

She had a letter in her closed hand, which she seemed to be pressing against her heart, with the fervor of one who held the most precious of earthly treasures in her grasp.

"Angela, Angela! congratulate me! He is coming! he has sent me such a letter!"

"Oh, *such* a letter!" she went on, covering the unconscious paper with kisses. "Who would have thought, who could have hoped, that it was all to end like this? After such years of doubt, distance, coldness, uncertainty, that he should say listen, Angela! I must read you one or two of the precious, precious sentences. They are not many, to be sure; but I must read them to you myself: it seems to me like a profanation to let any eyes but my own look upon these dear, dear words!"

She kissed the paper again and again!

"I *am* a fool!" she said, stopping herself, "quite a childish fool! But oh, Angela! such words! I am so happy!"

Vavasour to Augusta.

"I have been ungrateful for your friendship, and unconscious of

its worth. At last I have learned to feel the full value of constancy and truth, such as yours. If it is not too late, Augusta, let me claim at length that heart and hand which ought, long ago, to have been mine, had I not been stupidly insensible and willfully blind. I ask them now, and offer you, in return, a heart that will be devoted through life to you, and whose study it shall be to make your happiness. I mean to be down at Donnington the day after to-morrow. I have some business first to finish for my father, that will not be delayed; besides, I choose to give you time to write to me, should my capricious conduct have exhausted your patience, and should it, indeed, be too late for repentance. VAVASOUR."

Angela rose from her seat; she came forward with that angel look of love and benevolence, which tells of one who has done with this world for herself, and only lives in the happiness of others; she threw her kind arms round her friend, but she found it hard to speak—her heart was full.

The whole air and countenance of Augusta was that of one so perfectly, so excessively happy, yet so touched and so softened by her happiness, that it was almost affecting; tears stood in her eyes, those eyes so little used to tears, as again and again she kissed her letter.

"Such a change!" she kept repeating; "after all that terrible coldness, that impenetrable reserve! And to do me justice at last! for it is justice, Angela. Mine is an honest heart—I may say that, with all its faults; and for one I honor so truly and prize so highly, what may I not be capable of becoming, what will I not do? Oh, he shall see that I can be all he could wish, when once he has got me out of this hateful set we are in here!" said she.

"Shall you write any thing in answer?" asked Angela.

"Oh, I don't know. I long to write something, but I don't know what to say. You know one must not be too coming, child: 'the fruit that will fall without shaking.' There has been a little too much of that, I fear; and yet how happily he puts it, and it seems so cold to answer nothing. What can I write—what can I say? or shall I let silence give consent? But then he's so odd, perhaps he may be seized with a doubting fit. Poor fellow! I can not wish him to endure such a misery as that, with all his sins. Perhaps he may think that if I were unchanged I should have written; and so, if I were unchanged, I should. The Augusta of old days would, and never could, have cared a jiffy about it; but Angela's delicate, womanly ways are infectious, I believe. I catch myself thinking

what you would do, instead of following my impulses in my old careless way. I do, indeed."

"Do you?" said Angela, again embracing her. "Then I think I should write one little line, if I were in your place. I think, considering the terms you stand upon, there could not be the least harm in it. I think he must be disappointed not to get a syllable in answer to his charming letter."

"Charming!" looking at her with one of her sudden, quick, uncomfortable glances. "But I won't be so mad!" said she, hastily. "I won't yield again to that stupid insanity. I am sure of his heart now—what do I want more?"

"It would, indeed, be insanity," said Angela, shaking her head sadly, "to injure your happiness by such a wild imagination as that. I am not a very dangerous person, even if Mr. Vavasour were utterly devoid of truth and honor."

"Forgive me, dear child! I have suffered so much," said Augusta, looking really ashamed of herself. "But oh, Angela! what I have suffered is not to be told. Such pangs, such horrible pangs, such black and desperate hours of hopeless jealousy; such passing moments of ecstatic bliss, such plunges into a sea of horrible despair! I have felt as if I were struggling in the raging waters, and that they were overwhelming me; they often did nigh overwhelm me. There have been times, Angela, when I thought I must go mad."

"Did you ever feel," she went on, sitting down, but still holding her letter pressed close to her heart—"Did you ever feel that horrible sensation, as if one's mind were just going to give way, when all sorts of strange, fantastical thoughts come into one's brain, and one feels that one could run about, and screech, and tear one's hair? Oh, it is dreadful to experience in real life what one sees sometimes acted on a stage, and takes, perhaps, for the most exaggerated tragedy."

"Poor Augusta!" said Angela, tenderly.

"I can speak of it now, now it is all over," said Augusta, shuddering at the recollection. "I never dared, much as we have talked together about it, I never dared to describe those feelings to you; one is terrified even to think of such things. *They* have passed, at all events, I hope. Absence helps one; and natural high spirits, such as mine, help one; but there were passages in my life I dared not even look back upon: it was like a dreadful page in the book of my mind, which I kept forcibly closed. Now it is all over, I can think of it."

But there was a strange, dark, troubled expression came over her face, even when she did then think of it.

"Better not, even now," said Angela, tenderly. "A very dear friend of mine used to tell me never to look back. She said, if I would bear my burden, I must only look forward. That advice was intended to help me when I should be alone, and no one to comfort me, and prevent me increasing my misery by a contrast with past happiness. Do not diminish present happiness by a contrast with past misery."

"Right," said Augusta, "quite right; feel how my heart trembles and beats."

The poor heart was, indeed, fluttering and beating wildly. Augusta could hardly stand—she had been forced to sit down; she was quite overpowered, quite overwhelmed, with this unexpected tide of joy. She had never been accustomed to rest for support upon any thing but the energies of her own mind—a broken reed, in truth, in every moment of trial, it had ever proved, and so it proved now.

"I think," she said, for she was of a temper which, when much excited, loves to give its emotions words—a habit which may be observed in characters of vehement rather than very deep feeling—"I think that what has preserved life and reason has been, that he never *did* give me any just occasion for jealousy. I have had my twinges—who that loves has not? I showed that plain enough when I could be jealous of *you*—after this, what was there I might not be jealous of? But he never gave me the least real occasion for it. One thing I *was* sure of, if he did not love me, he loved no other creature in the world. Oh, if I had once really believed that he was faithless, I should have been frantic.

"You have that in *Phédre*, too," she went on. "How I have studied that play! When she finds out that Hypolitus—that young impenetrable savage, that, insensible to tenderness, can love, has loved, does love another—oh, it is grand!—it is terrible!—it is dreadfully, dreadfully *true*!"

"Dear Augusta, how thankful you ought to be that you have been spared this! I agree with you, that must be a horrible thing to have to bear."

"Far, far better that he should be in his grave! far, far, far better!" cried Augusta.

"Or that one should be sleeping there one's self!" said Angela.

All these scenes of passion were terribly trying to her, poor thing; they seemed to tear open the wounds of her heart in the most cruel manner.

She found it difficult to resist that wish which kept gaining upon her; there were times when the longing for rest was intense, the longing to be sleeping quietly in the grave by him, her first and only love.

"Dear Angela, how pale and sad you look!" cried Augusta again, and, as usual, her attention once awakened, full of kindness and almost of remorse for the indulgence of feelings which might have called up painful recollections in others. "I am so thoughtless! talking of my happiness makes you sad: it is such a contrast. How selfish I am!"

"Oh, no, no: you selfish! I would rather see you happy than any thing in the world."

And this was quite true; she loved Augusta devotedly, and in the absence of other affections, this one had become very strong. The desire to see Augusta happy had become the most passionate wish of her heart.

"I can not help looking pale and sad, now and then; you know these feelings will return at times; the ghost of some sorrow, is never quite laid—'*il y a toujours des revenans.*' But it is I who am to blame to damp your joy by my vain regrets for what is gone. But don't think of me; believe me, I am reconciled—I have long been reconciled—I have submitted, indeed I have submitted."

And the large, large tears rolled rapidly over her cheeks, as she declared her resignation in a very rain of sorrow.

But she soon wiped her eyes, recovered her usual fortitude, and said to Augusta, with much earnestness and sincerity,

"It is you that must forgive me; I can not help it now and then: but I think it very selfish by useless and hopeless regrets to interfere with other people's happiness—when one can help it, I mean; and I have had so much happiness since I came here, dear Augusta, that it is only now and then that I feel much of this pain. And now you are going to be so happy, I think I shall be quite happy too; you can not guess the joy that what has happened to-day gives me."

And it was this sort of interchange of feelings between two characters so opposite, and yet so sympathetic, which had raised their mutual affection to so high a pitch. They had not been very long acquainted, and yet they felt an affection for each other which might have been the growth of years; so natural it is for some characters to harmonize and run together, as it were.

There were no sacrifices which could have been proposed to them which they did not feel capable of making for each other, except, indeed, one; every thing in the world but one, Augusta felt she

could have offered to her friend: but that one she guarded with a jealous passion almost amounting to fury, like a mother fighting in agonies to defend her child. It was rather a blind, passionate, natural instinct, than the effect of a just appreciation of the value of that so vehemently defended.

Her attachment to Vavasour seemed to have mastered every other feeling.

Augusta was not one of those young ladies who trouble themselves much about dress. Gay, fearless, accustomed to admiration, and in general indifferent to the impression she made, she had not sufficient interest in the subject to occupy her thoughts more than the short half-hours she spent at her toilet. She was, however, of course, always well dressed, and like a woman of fashion, which she certainly pre-eminently appeared.

But love makes such conscious cowards of women; love makes them so doubting, so nervous, so hesitating—is so ruinous to self-possession, all happy self-confidence, all gay indifference to opinion; love makes such sad, sad havoc with that feeling, sensitive sex, when its natural course is unhappily reversed, and the woman has given her heart before it has been asked for!

At Palermo, her pride, her spirit, her rapid variations of feeling, had preserved her from these weaknesses; but now that her lover, her declared lover, was coming, she felt herself a prey to them, like the veriest woman of them all. She could think and speak of nothing else; her mind dwelt upon this meeting.

How would it be under these new circumstances? Where, when, and how should they meet? What would he say? How should she look?

Above all—imaginative poet as he was—idolater of art and beauty—fool of his eye—what would he think of her when he saw her again? What might not imagination have painted her in absence? And what might she appear in actual presence?

Was she gone off? Was she improved in appearance?

Poor Augusta, she was humbled, indeed. Many an anxious look she cast upon her glass—she who had scarcely given herself time to consult a glass before.

You can not think how all this weakness touched Angela. It was interesting, it was affecting, to see her such a very woman, this high-spirited Miss Darby, such a mere foolish girl!

Turning round from her glass, where she had been examining her face, and asking whether she was not dreadfully tanned, and did not look horrid?

"How careless I have been! working in the sun, in that silly garden, and without my hat."

And then Angela recollected how she *had*, with extreme kindness, worked and toiled in the little cottage-garden, when she herself was too busy teaching her children, or perhaps too weak to share the labor."

"I wish I could look as pale and delicate as you do, Angela. It was my high color and great black eyes, for one thing, which he never could bear; and see how red my hands are grown!"

"Dear Augusta, don't vex yourself. You are a little tanned, to be sure," said Angela, half laughing; "but depend upon it, any one who looks in your face now must see that in it which has made you handsomer than ever you could have been in your life. If Mr. Vavasour doesn't think so, I can only say he may be very sorry for it."

"As how?"

"He must be certainly wanting in good taste and good feeling."

"Well, I am glad you think so; but I wish I had taken more care not to tan myself. And now, what shall I put on for dinner the first day? My things are got dreadfully out of order. One never cares what one puts on for the blacklegs and jockeys here. I declare I have not one presentable dress in the world."

"Pooh, pooh! you look so well in every thing."

"He hates dark colors, and I always look so bad in light ones. Besides, one would not be too much dressed, ay, Angela? One would not look as if one had taken a vast deal of pains about it, you know."

"Certainly not, dear Miss Darby; but when did *you* ever look as if you had?"

Mr. Vavasour had written to Mrs. Darby to announce his intended arrival. He was to come by the coach, and would arrive, perhaps, only just in time to dress for dinner.

What if there should be no possibility of meeting before the party now staying in the house should be assembled in the drawing-room? What if the first meeting must necessarily be in public?

Augusta tried to persuade herself, and Angela tried to persuade her, that this might, after all, be the best; but it was difficult to arrive at this conviction.

The eventful morning at last has arrived, and a sad, nervous morning it was.

The two friends passed a great part of it at the little cottage, of which Augusta was become almost as fond as Angela.

They walked about the little garden—stood and watched the rivulet gurgling and playing among the shining pebbles—tried to amuse themselves with the children—found them troublesome—sent them away to Nurse—sat down under the tree—got up and walked about the garden again—and then wandered among the bushes and little precipices of the hill behind, where they had lately cut some pretty paths.

The morning seemed as if it would never come to an end.

They were neither of them in very great spirits; they were both too much agitated; Augusta for herself, Angela for her friend.

They were at that point of expectation when we seem incapable of tasting joy; the heart is so oppressed, so big with anticipation, that it is overclouded; our very happiness makes us serious; nay, sometimes almost sad.

“I can hear the church at Upham striking four,” said Augusta, at last. “What an odd state I am in! I never heard the clock at this distance in my life before—how excitable one’s nerves can become! Do you not think it time to go home to dress?”

“I am quite ready, if you are; but what will you do with yourself when you are dressed? Had we not better dawdle away a little more time here?”

It was a lovely day at the end of October. The trees had not yet lost all their leaves; the oaks were, many of them, still green—a rich, dark, mellow green; others scarlet, others golden; the birches and poplars were hanging their beautiful yellow streamers over the rivulet; the hollies were beginning to display their crimson berries amid the thorn-bushes on the chalk-banks. The sky was a soft, faint blue, with small, delicate, white clouds resting, as it were, upon its bosom; the air would have been quite still, except for a soft breeze that now and then swept over the tree-tops, and made a hushed, whispering sound among the branches.

The distance was checkered with bright lights and dark-marked shadows, all fading, as they approached the horizon, into a pale and lovely gray; in short, it was such an autumn day as you will all have enjoyed in our lovely and capricious climate, when the sun shines forth while it is still October.

It was well for our traveler that he was in his majesty’s mail, for his imagination was peculiarly alive to the influences of Nature, and a fine day like this excited his feelings in a way which, under his present sensations, he was peculiarly desirous to avoid.

Engaged to Miss Darby, he felt how necessary it was to take

leave, as it were, of Nature—to have done with the dangerous influences of her wild and beauteous poetry forever; he trusted that he might be able to love Augusta amid the scenes in which he was destined to pass his life with her—in modern houses, fashionable drawing-rooms, and among every-day people; that thus he might be able to attach himself to her, as he seriously desired to do, as he felt she deserved that he should. But once alone with Nature, once abandoned to the influences of that imagination, that dangerous gift he had indulged too long, what visions came! what dreams were there!—visions in which she never, never could take a part!

Recollections which would not die—hopes, however disappointed, which would not be forgotten—images of happiness never to be effaced, came crowding upon him, if he but once suffered himself to return to and be alone with Nature—that Nature he so worshiped—that Nature which had been to him as his mother, his muse, his companion, his friend!

But from all this he was about to become an exile; but an honorable, willing exile.

He was receiving his first lesson—an important lesson—bitter, but wholesome!

Too long the slave of his fancy, too long given up to those vague day-dreams which are the more dangerous to a young man of his temper, because they have an appearance of disinterestedness and refinement more than happens to the commoner sort, which is very seducing to self-love, he had now, at least, awakened to this truth—that if he were to perform the part he had chosen, as he ought to perform it, there must be an end at once, not only of all that was sickly and sentimental, but that a very tight reign must be kept even over those wanderings of imagination which, in happier circumstances, would have been harmless.

He had offered his hand to a high-spirited, warm-hearted girl, whom he had long known, who, he had at last been made aware, through the representations of his mother, loved him with a truth and sincerity of which, as we have seen, he had till then been ignorant. He had not ventured to ask himself how much of his heart he had to give in return for hers; but he believed he could and should love her in time, if once he could tear himself from the witchery of dearer associations.

His feelings outraged, and his heart bleeding at every pore, he had passionately torn asunder ten thousand tender ties which bound him to things with which Augusta Darby had indeed nothing

to do, with anguish the intensity of which can be understood only by those who have lived as he had done—too much for the world within, too little for the world without—he had desperately closed the door upon the past, and had shut out all those dreams of more than earthly beauty in which his soul had so long reveled.

He, too, had determined never to look back.

But it was frightful to look forward!

To one who had lived to his own heart, as he had done—to one so simple in his tastes, so lofty in his aspirations, with feelings so deep and tender, and a temper serious and severe, what a void was the life now presented!—an ordinary life, with ordinary people, unsweetened by those affections for which his relish was so intense—a life without definite purpose or aim.

He was learning, as I said, his first lesson—to correct and restrain the useless extravagance of his imagination; he had yet to learn to bend these high aspirations to the true purposes of life.

He was yet so young, that a disappointed passion seemed to have turned the prospect before him into a frightful waste, which he contemplated with a gloomy indifference to his own happiness, amounting almost to despair.

But he hesitated not in his purpose.

She loved him, he knew—she had loved him with constancy and fidelity from their earliest childhood; she had been faithful to him, so indifferent—she had been constant to him, so capricious and unkind; her character, so spirited and independent, had been subdued to tenderness for him. While

The contrast was strong.

Should such a heart be lost—should such a life be blighted—because he had been wayward, fanciful, weak—deluded by a vain charm?

What was the part of a man to do, now—now that his dream was over, his sweet vision fled—that he was restored at least to reason?

Shipwrecked himself, to devote himself to her who had alone been true when he and all the rest had proved false, and make a generous-hearted girl as happy as it lay in his power to do—this was all which seemed left to him.

But this resolution could not allay the pang within, nor the miserable irritability of his feelings.

And so he felt in harmony with the hackney-coach in which he rattled to join the mail—in harmony with the *inside* of the coach, in a corner of which, muffled up in his cloak, his hat over his

brows, he sat—in harmony with those long lines of dismal streets, with all that wretched district of Spitalfields, through which the road to Cambridgeshire passes—in harmony with every thing that was unsightly, miserable, and desolate.

He felt almost comforted by the sort of stupid insensibility which comes over the sensitive mind when carried on through a long succession of scenes of this description, where, wanting time to pause and relieve, we can only despond and be miserable. In this state of despondency, this misery of external things, it was a sort of relief to him to gaze upon the world without, and find it responding to the world within. Miserable as such relief is, it is sometimes one.

As the coach emerged into the more wooded and picturesque part of Essex, now embrowned with all the loveliest hues of October—as the soft clouds flitted gently over the pale blue sky—as the distant landscapes gleamed, or were darkly shaded under the varying lights—as the soft breeze began to play upon his cheek—he turned away, he drew up the window suddenly, with a noise that made his one fellow-traveler start; and then, with a slight “I beg your pardon!” he, pulling his hat yet forwarder over his brows, sank into his corner, and seemed to sleep.

He did not sleep—he had not slept for some nights, never since his letter to Augusta had been dispatched.

Poor Augusta!

Little did she dream of the true state of his feelings!

CHAPTER XLIV.

. Oh, that a man might know
The end of this day's business ere it come!

Julius Cæsar.

Poor Augusta!—little did she dream of the true state of his feelings!

She was so full of her own, poor girl; and Angela, who sat by her, was so full of Augusta's too, that they neither of them once cast a thought upon Mr. Vavasour, or upon the sudden change that seemed to have taken place in his views and sentiments.

Augusta, indeed, explained every thing in the way that best pleased

herself: she dwelt little, or not at all, upon the indifference he had almost pointedly displayed at Palermo, and only thought of his impatience upon the journey, the preoccupation of his thoughts, his indifference to scenes and things which once afforded him so much pleasure, and his manifest anxiety to return to England;—all which she naturally connected with his last letter, and interpreted to her own advantage.

Miss Darby's room terminated on one side of the front of the house, the two wings of which projecting, the center in some degree retreated; these windows commanded a view of the park, such as I have described it, with its large extent of rough, unsightly grass, its stunted trees, its groups of deer, and the long funereal line of the dark avenue.

They had now returned from the cottage; the day was so fine that the windows were open, and at one of them, hand in hand, they sat looking out toward the avenue. The road from the town where the mail-coach stopped was up this avenue, and though the window did not command a view up it, the sound of any carriage approaching that way could be quite distinctly heard.

No carriage as yet approached, however; every thing seemed almost preternaturally still this quiet afternoon; the little breeze of the morning was quite lulled; a twittering bird, uttering its scanty autumn song, was all that, from time to time, was heard.

Augusta sat there, looking, listening, starting at the slightest sound—Angela by her, watching her.

Many were the false alarms, many the starts, the exchange of looks, the disappointments, and the sitting down quietly again. At length a carriage was distinctly heard advancing, and Augusta pushed her chair hastily back from the window, lest she should be seen from without.

“Just look, Angela! Sister Anne, sister Anne?” trying to rally her spirits, “do you see any one coming?”

“Not yet, but I hear the rattling of a chaise quite plain: it is certainly coming down the avenue.”

“Look again! look again, dear child! Something will happen amiss still, I feel sure. This will never, never be!” said Augusta, with the superstition common to those subject to an unexpected turn of good fortune.

“It's coming nearer. Look again, dear creature!—don't put your head out, though. What do you see?”

“The post-chaise turns out of the avenue—it is coming up to the door: there is one gentleman, muffled up in a cloak, and his hat

pulled over his eyes, getting out; that is all that I can see," said Angela, drawing back herself now into the room.

And now the door-bell rang loud through the house.

"He is come, then!" said Augusta; "he is come! Angela, dear, a glass of water! Oh, how, how shall I meet him first? Not that I feel nervous, neither; I have known him all my life—but how shall, shall I behave myself? Oh, if I could but see him first alone! Oh, Angela! tell me, child, what shall I do?—before this odious set of men, too!"

"I wish we had happened to have been in the drawing-room with Mrs. Darby when he came in."

"But then that waiting—waiting, would have been so insupportable. Waiting, and listening, and expecting, and pretending not to wait, not to listen, not to expect. But my goodness, girl, what o'clock is it? Is it not time to think of dressing?"

"The stable clock has only just gone five; I counted it."

"And what are we to do with these two mortal hours till seven? How strange and unkind it looks, doesn't it, to have him two whole hours in the house and not to see him! One's cousin, too! One ought naturally to meet one's cousin. I wish I had not been so foolish, but had stayed quietly down stairs, where it was natural to be, till he came. What a real baby I am become! But shut the window, dear girl, for it's cold now; and let us think what we will do."

But that was soon settled.

There was a light knock at the door, and in answer to the usual "Come in," Mrs. Darby's maid appeared. She brought a message from her mistress to the lady to say, that Mr. Vavasour was arrived, and was sitting in Mrs. Darby's dressing-room; and "her mamma would be glad if Miss Darby would come and join her there."

She cast a hurried, troubled, but delighted glance at Angela.

"Yes, I'll come—say I'm coming directly. Dear Angela, did you ever see any thing so hot as I look? Do help me to tidy my hair a little: I can't do it," said poor Augusta. Her hands were, indeed, shaking, and her cheek flushing.

"There—thank you; how do I look?—very red?"

"Very nice, dear Miss Darby;—pray be composed."

"I'll try—I'll try. But bless you, dear girl, do go down with me. I really can't go down alone. What a coward I am!"

"What a coward you are, indeed, dear Augusta!" said Angela, almost laughing at her distress: "but go down alone you certainly must—for nothing on earth should tempt me to go down with you. And now, pray don't lose time, for I almost see your courage oozing out of your fingers' ends; I really almost do."

Gently forcing her to the door, gently pushing her out, and shutting it after her.

There was no retreat. She made an effort; along the passage she went, and down the few steps which led to Mrs. Darby's dressing-room, opened the door, and there he stood.

The retreating steps of the considerate mother, departing through the door which led to her bed-room, might have been heard, had she had power to listen; but she had not. Strange sounds were in her ears, strange dazzling flashes before her eyes; the room was swimming round her. He was standing with his face toward the fire; on the door opening he turned round, and she never knew how it was, but the next thing she was in his arms.

There was such a confusion in her brain, that she was almost insensible for a few moments.

"Dear Augusta!" uttered in a voice of very great feeling; this was the sound that first called her to herself.

She opened her eyes and looked up in his face, as there she stood, supported by his arms and leaning against his bosom.

It was impossible for face to convey more tenderness and kindness than that face did.

He was, indeed, deeply touched by this artless display of affection upon the part of his cousin. He had never had the least conception of its extent—hardly of its existence—before; he began already to estimate the value of the heart he had so long misprised. He pressed her with real affection, almost fondness, to his breast, and touched with his lips that forehead which was raised up toward him.

"My dear, dear Augusta!" he said, and in such a tone!

She made no answer, but by a sudden gush of happy, thankful tears. They ran fast over her cheeks. Then, as if ashamed of her emotion, she hastily passed her hands over her eyes, disengaged herself from his arms, and going to the fire, tried to smile, and to say—

"You startled me so!"

"Did I, my love?" said he, very softly: his voice was the sweetest that ever was heard when it expressed his feelings. "Did I, my love?" putting his arm again fondly round her waist, and pressing that face of emotion once more to his bosom. "Did I, my love?—my Augusta!—my own!"

No, there was no resisting it. Sorely wounded his heart had been by the treachery of others, and gratefully did it open to receive this honest, genuine expression of an affection it was impossible to mistake.

And to her that voice—that voice, in accents so new—those few sentences, so full of feeling and tenderness, and intended for her! It was too much for the once high-spirited Augusta Darby.

She wept upon his bosom like a child.

They had a little recovered themselves, but they continued to stand by the fire, holding each other's hands; and then Augusta, looking anxiously in her lover's face, said, while her heart throbbed with pleasure at the sight—

“How ill you are looking, dear Vavasour! I am afraid you have suffered very much during your journey.”

“Yes,” said he; and a strange, dark cloud passed over his fine eyes: “I *have* suffered—but it is all over now. I will tell you about it all some day,” he added, again putting his arm around her waist, and kissing her forehead. “When we are become quite a humdrum man and wife, then I will tell my Augusta all about it.”

“About it?—About what?” said she, rather anxiously.

“About all my fancies, follies, and faults. It will be a long chapter, that—won't it, my love?”

“Ah, Vavasour!”

And the look of unspeakable love—confidence—honest trust—reverence—idolatry—which accompanied these words, went straight to his heart.

How unjust had he been to so much affection! but he would make amends for it now.

He could, indeed, scarcely believe that it was the same Augusta he had known at Palermo; she seemed to him so softened, so improved, since he had seen her in Italy.

The happy influence of Angela's society; the life of active kindness and benevolence which she had been leading; the having been in great measure withdrawn by other occupations and companions from her father's worthless associates, had, in truth, softened and improved this fine girl in a remarkable degree; and now that her pride and her heart were at once satisfied, her manners natural, and her expression full of tenderness and feeling, she looked, what he had never in his life thought her before, not only handsome but lovely.

He was surprised, too, at himself, and could hardly comprehend the grateful satisfaction—the quiet and the peace—which had suddenly succeeded to the torturing irritation of his late feelings.

Yes, he began to hope that he should speedily forget all in life which had not been Augusta. There might be the reaction of mo-

ments—remembrances that would not be entirely obliterated, might force themselves upon him; but it would be but as of a dream—a dream difficult to forget, but altogether past: that truth, simplicity, and reality, for which his heart sickened, he had found, where he little thought to find it—in the honest heart of his cousin.

In the mean time, while so much was going forward in Mrs. Darby's dressing room, Angela was very happily engaged where she was, preparing the toilet of her friend. She was bringing out her most becoming dress, and having spread it upon the bed, was, with the assistance of Mrs. Maria, carefully renewing the ribbons of the trimming, and refreshing the plaits of the flowers; and then she wove a few scarlet leaves of the Virginian creeper, to make the ornament for her hair.

While thus engaged, she might be heard singing to herself a low song—a thing she had, perhaps, never before done since Carteret's death. She had sung to her piano-forte, it is true; but not to herself: but now, as a bird that awakens to the sunshine of spring, her heart expanded to the certainty of her friend's happiness; and the music of days gone by was heard softly issuing from her lips, as now she turned a sleeve, and looked at it; now again smoothed the folds of the dress; now gave a stitch, or assisted Mrs. Maria with her advice; now placed the Virginian creeper leaves in all sorts of positions.

We leave her thus employed.

There is another upon this eventful day should not be quite forgotten—young O'Hara.

He fancied himself very much in love; he had long thought it must be so.

He supposed, of course, it was with the fascinating musician whose notes were so delightful to his ears, and in listening to whom, accompanying her songs on the piano-forte, or playing duets, he had spent so much of his time. He supposed he should have wished to marry her, only he was certain his father and mother would never forgive him if he thought of marrying a governess; and that, therefore, he had put the matter out of his head.

He kept dawdling his time away, at Donnington, ever a welcome guest he knew, particularly to Mrs. Darby and the young ladies; for he was, indeed, very far superior to any of the gentlemen who usually frequented the place. He had been as busy as the best about the cottage, was not unknown to the children, and had enjoyed the life they had all been leading as much as any one.

Miss Darby was by all the world believed to be engaged to Mr. Vavasour, so he looked upon her quite in the light of a married woman; and she, wishing to engage him for her friend, treated him with an ease and cordiality which made him feel always at ease and welcome whenever he appeared, and a pleasant addition to any plan that might be going on.

He was, therefore, quite at a loss to understand the very disagreeable feeling that came over him when he heard that Mr. Vavasour was expected down at Donnington, or why, at the first sound of the approaching carriage-wheels, he had hastily—instead of waiting, as one quite an *habitué de la maison* might do, to receive another—jumped out of the billiard-room window, where he had been exercising himself in making strokes against himself, had plunged into a thick shrubbery behind the house, and walked away as far from the scene of action as he could.

Mr. O'Hara had never been accustomed to think about his own feelings, or ask himself any questions. He felt very much out of humor, dull, heavy, and unsociable, he knew that, and his head ached a good deal; yet there he kept walking about without his hat, this rather cold though fine evening, and thinking he never felt so uncomfortable in his life; while Vavasour and Augusta were engaged in pleasant talk over the fire in the dressing-room, and Angela was arranging the trimming of her friend's dress, and humming her little song.

"This tiresome Vavasour!" thought O'Hara; "what must he come spoiling all our pleasure for? And then we shall have no more music, I dare say, for I think somebody told me he hates music."

CHAPTER XLV.

. Ha! who comes here?
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this apparition.

Julius Cæsar.

DEAR Augusta! how happy, how thrice happy she was, as, sitting before her glass, while Angela—who would not let any one but herself do any thing for her at this moment—wove the dark

bands of her shining hair in braids and plaits, and then hung in it some of the crimson leaves of the Virginian creeper, which she had so carefully arranged.

She could not help feeling pleased at the result of her labors; while Augusta, conscious how handsome she looked, and grateful to the attending friend so busy on her behalf, turned up her face to kiss the white, and but too transparent hand of that fair, but happiest Cinderella, certainly at this moment thinking of nothing but Augusta, and of making her look as beautiful as she possibly could, in which she doubtless succeeded, as I have told you, to an extraordinary degree.

Not that all the additional charms which at that moment adorned Miss Darby, must be attributed to the skill of her friend.

Her dress was, however, extremely becoming; it was rich, but not too rich; elegant, rather than strikingly fashionable; but such as set off her fine, commanding figure to the best advantage. In short, Miss Darby was looking as handsome as possible. And there was a softness in the expression of her countenance, and a something of bashfulness and hesitation in her manner, that rendered her appearance unusually interesting.

Angela's own toilet was soon finished.

She was in white muslin, with long sleeves, made pretty high in the throat; she had a white long sash; and a tea-rose, which Augusta had brought her from the green-house, in her bosom; her hair was just simply drawn round her face, and knotted behind.

Thus dressed, she looked as pretty a confidante for the splendid-looking *première rôle* in the drama about to be enacted as any one could desire to see.

And thus they descended to the dining room, the confidante being, in contradiction to the usual proprieties of the drama, arm-in-arm with the heroine of the piece.

Augusta felt a little nervous at the idea of again meeting her lover in the presence of all these disagreeable men. Angela kept encouraging her as well as she could; but, while she talked and endeavored to rally and laugh, came the pale, cold shade of her lover, as it so often did, seeming to rise before her, and sadly to ask how she could be gay and happy, and he in his cold bed under the dark waters.

The girls were late in coming down.

They had kept dawdling, as people will in such cases, and had made matters worse; for all the company of gentlemen (there were no ladies of the dinner party that day) had already assembled, and

Mrs. Darby, from her place on the sofa, which now had made its annual migration from the window to the fire, had introduced Mr. O'Hara to Mr. Vavasour, with whom he was soon engaged in conversation, and whom he had found a very agreeable man, and quite different from what he had expected.

Mr. Vavasour had made much the same discovery with respect to the young Irishman, who, in spite of the potato in his head, he thought, showed much sense and intelligence, and had manners of a very different style and cast from those usually to be observed in the frequenters of Mr. and Mrs. Darby's circle.

The room was to-day very brilliantly lighted; it always looked more comfortable in winter than it did in summer, for, with a huge blazing fire, the sofas rolled round to it, the shutters closed, the curtains drawn, and a profusion of wax lights blazing around, the usual disagreeable bareness of furniture, books, and objects of amusement, was not so apparent.

They were all talking away; there was quite a hum of voices.

Mr. Vavasour had now retired a little from the rest, and, leaning upon the back of Mrs. Darby's sofa, was silently watching the door, and wondering when Augusta would come down.

The door opened suddenly, and wide. He started from his position, and turning a little round, stood upright, and fully displayed before it.

Two figures appear: the one is in dark velvet, with the crimson leaves of the Virginian creeper in her hair; the other in white, robed like some angel, as it appeared to him—for his eyes were dazzled as with a sudden radiance—it was as if bright rays of light were shining all around her.

His poor head is swimming—he knows not what he sees.

But she!

A faint shriek!

A faint cry!

An impassioned rush forward!

“Carteret! Carteret!”

And a heavy fall upon the drawing-room floor!

He was no longer master of himself; he forgot where he was—who he was—what he was.

He sprang forward, fell down on one knee beside her, and caught the lifeless body in his arms!

The extravagance of his passion, the wild vehemence of his looks

and gestures, the frantic violence with which he pressed his treasure to his heart, was that of one quite beside himself—and so he was.

He felt, if we may dare to use the image, as it will be when the dead, awakened, shall rush forward in heaven to meet the long-lost, restored once more.

“Angela! Angela! Angela!”

“My love!—my life! Angela!—awake! awake!”

“Dead! no, she’s not dead! She can’t be dead! Open the windows!—the door! My love! my life! She can’t—she can’t be dead!”

“No,” said Augusta, falling down upon both knees, with a face black as death, “she’s not dead!”

And then, quivering and shaking in every limb, in a hasty, passionate manner, she strove with both hands to disengage the insensible form of her friend from his vehement embrace.

“Angela, listen to me! Open your eyes! I know you are not—you can not be dead! Open your eyes, I say!”

The company had all gathered round by this time.

“What is all this about? Lay her flat upon the floor, Mr. Vavasour; that’s the best thing in these dead faints, I have heard. What’s it all about? I don’t understand—I didn’t see,” Mrs. Darby kept saying.

She had neither distinctly seen nor understood the wild and hurried scene of passion that had passed before her, the outburst from his lips, nor the terrible agitation of Augusta.

And he was saying nothing now; but, her head still thrown over his arm, was bending over her, his eyes fixed upon hers, watching with intense anxiety for some sign that she would revive,

It seemed as if Augusta could bear this no longer.

“Lay her head down, Mr. Vavasour, I tell you, flat upon the floor! What’s the use of holding her up in that way? Would you kill her outright? For Heaven’s sake, some of you fetch water!”

He had yielded to her remonstrances, and, laying the fainting, insensible form upon the floor, he rose up from his knees and stood immovable, his face ghastly pale, his eyes sometimes riveted upon her, or from time to time looking toward the windows with a confused, bewildered air, as if he wanted them opened, but could not articulate; while Augusta, still kneeling upon both knees, her hands clasped, with an expression of agony, kept gazing upon those features as they lay in the death-trance before her.

Water was brought, and Augusta bathed her temples. Then, suddenly looking up at Vavasour,

"She is living! she lives! She will open her eyes!" and with an impatient gesture, "Get away! go away! Stand out of her sight!" she cried.

But it seemed as if he had lost the power of motion.

He had risen from his knees as Augusta took Angela from his arms and laid her flat upon the floor; and he had stood there looking about him with a wild, confused air, glancing from time to time at the windows, as if he wanted them opened, and yet as if he could not speak, while Augusta, kneeling by the body, was sprinkling the face with water, her hands trembling, and her limbs shaking, like one in an ague, all the time.

While he, more like a dead than a living man, with face ghastly pale, stood opposite, watching her.

But neither of them had exchanged a glance.

At last, some one had opened the window; the cold night air blew upon her face, and she was beginning to revive.

"She is breathing! she breathes! she will open her eyes, I tell you!" glancing impatiently at him. "Go away, I say!"

But he seemed motionless.

At last Angela's eyes slowly and languidly opened—slowly and languidly they turned round.

But no sooner had they caught a glimpse of his figure than she uttered an appalling shriek, and fell at once into the most horrible convulsions.

The scene is too awful for description.

That beautiful and but too delicate frame—so slight—so young—so frail, tortured and twisted by horrible spasms, and rolling in agonies upon the floor.

The distracted lover, his hair on end, his eyes glaring, endeavoring in vain to hold her. Augusta, her face as pale as death, and cheeks now blistered over with tears, striving as vainly to assist him.

She sees O'Hara.

"For Heaven's sake, Mr. O'Hara, run down to the cottage and fetch up old Nurse!"

Old Nurse, rushing with angry impatience into the room, soon appeared, and hastening up to the group, and kneeling down by the agonized body—

"What's the matter now?" she cried; "what have you been all doing to my darling? Why, what's the matter now? My dove! my darling! what have they been doing to thee, I say? Is thy poor heart broke at last?" Then suddenly perceiving him—"Mr. Car-

teret! good heavens and earth! Mr. Carteret!—you here? What business have you here? what are you about, sir? Let her be this moment! How dare *you* touch her? Let her be, Miss Darby; you mustn't hold her that way in her convulsions; the more you try to keep her down, the worse. Miss Angela, love! Get me some sal volatile, will some of you, for the love of Heaven! Be quiet—have patience. It's going off; it will be over soon; only get out of her sight, will you, or will you not, Mr. Carteret?"

His heart, beating as if it would burst; his brain on fire; his eyes starting out of their sockets; his hands clenched and thrown over his head—

Thus the unhappy man was seen to dart out of the window.

"Stop him! follow him!" said Augusta, piteously looking up at O'Hara; "he is beside himself. By all you ever loved on earth, stop him—follow him—Mr. O'Hara!"

The young man obeyed without a word.

At length the paroxysm was over; Nature seemed to have exhausted her violence, the convulsions ceased, and Angela opened her eyes: she looked composed, but extremely ill, and as if she were too languid to speak; but she turned her eyes to Augusta, seemed trying to force her white, colorless lips, into a smile, and faintly whispered—

"What a strange dream it was!"

"Yes," said Augusta; "strange indeed!"

That was all she could articulate, for she felt herself choking, though she appeared resolved to master her emotion; a pulling at the velvet round her neck, from time to time, was the only outward sign of oppression.

While Nurse kept reiterating—

"Don't talk; be quiet, dear, will you? Keep still—keep still."

"I thought—I thought—I thought I saw him; Nurse," turning her eyes languidly toward her; "but say nothing about it to any one: perhaps it is—it is—that I am going to him!"

She closed her eyes, and her head sank upon Nurse's bosom.

Augusta now rose from her knees. She still preserved her wonderful composure. Pride and indignation combined to support her under this utter ruin of her dearest hopes. Not a symptom except the ashy paleness of her cheek, and now and then a sudden trembling of her limbs, betrayed, in the slightest degree, what was passing within.

One or two of the bystanders began now, under the direction of

Nurse, to lift the helpless and passive form of the lovely girl from the floor, and prepared to carry her up stairs and lay her upon her own bed.

Her white garments sweeping round her, her hair trailing to the ground, her eyes again closed from the excessive languor, her long fair throat drooping, and her head thrown powerless upon her shoulder—thus she was borne away, Nurse tenderly assisting, and Augusta, like some dark figure of despair, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and offering no further assistance, following gloomily after.

That all was over for her ; that some mysterious tie united Vavasour and Angela, was but too certain : the cause of *her* appalling emotion might be mistaken, but his cries and agonies left the matter beyond a doubt.

It would appear, however, as far as Angela was concerned, that the violent convulsions she had been thrown into at last had produced their usual effect in confusing the faculties. She seemed to have no distinct recollection of what had passed. The apparition of her lover, it is true, remained an indelible image upon her brain ; but she evidently doubted whether it was to be regarded as a vision or as an actual bodily appearance ; and, exhausted by the violence of the agitations she had gone through, she said very little ; and having been carefully undressed and laid in bed by Nurse, she soon fell asleep, still holding that faithful servant's hand.

Augusta, who had been standing at the bottom of the bed quite motionless, but apparently passive, and with her large, dry, black eyes fixed upon her friend, turned away, and without saying a word, laid her hand upon the lock of the door, opened it cautiously, and went out.

CHAPTER XLVI..

. For this present,
I would not, so with love I might entreat you,
Be any further moved.

Julius Cæsar.

AUGUSTA quitted Angela's room in a confusion of contending feelings, that seemed to deaden the sense of intolerable pain. Surprise—that sort of terrific surprise with which we should contem-

plate the sudden disappearance of all our possessions in the yawning jaws of an earthquake—at first stupefied every faculty; but as this feeling subsided, as the reality of what had happened pressed itself upon her, then the fearful storm of the passions arose.

Pity and indignation, raging jealousy and disappointed love, were warring within her breast; the storm was dreadful, and her whole frame shook with the agony, as, thrown across her bed, her hands clenched in her hair, she rolled and trembled in the paroxysms.

She saw Vavasour, as he had darted from the room, his clenched hands wildly tossed above his head; his passionate cries of tenderness over another rung in her ears.

Bitter anger, and cruel, cruel disappointment! anguish, and perplexity!

Then suddenly the idea that he was in danger flashed across her brain. She started up: "He must be sought and saved! he must not perish! he must not be lost in his distraction! Fearful, fearful thought!" She rushed from her room to seek him.

She had seen him rush out into the night, with the gestures of a madman; and where would he be found now? Had he fled from them all, distracted with shame at this disclosure of his treachery, to seek self-destruction? or would he return, and offer himself the explanation of this strange mysterious history? She hurried impatiently down the gallery.

Her hair all in disorder, and the crimson leaves of the Virginian creeper still hanging among the black, disheveled tresses, like lovely parasites amid some beautiful ruin; her face pale as death, and cheeks stained with tears impatiently dashed away; like that grand but fatal fury, whom but to look upon was horror, she might be seen rushing down the gallery, descending the stairs, and hurrying to the drawing-room.

The door stood partly open, but all within was perfectly silent. One by one the gentleman who had been invited to dinner had made their way to the stables, taken their horses, and had ridden home. Neither Mr. Vavasour nor Mr. O'Hara had returned. Mrs. Darby had betaken herself to her own room, Mr. Darby was sitting alone by the chimneypiece, buried in his large arm-chair, and with his feet stretched toward the fire.

The whole apartment bore evidence of the recent disorder. The window still stood wide open, and the night wind was blowing the curtains about: tables and chairs were flung down and lying in confusion; and the candles flaring away in the air from the open windows and door.

The space upon the floor where Angela had lain rolling in dreadful convulsions, the two chairs that Vavasour had flung down as he vehemently darted away, were still as he had thrown them; but he was not there.

Her eyes glanced rapidly round, and in a moment she was gone again.

She ran up stairs hastily to Vavasour's room; his door stood half open, just as he had left it when he came down to dinner; but he was not there. Then she hurried to her mother's dressing-room—that room where scarcely more than two hours ago she had been so ineffably, so supremely happy.

The embers were dying upon the hearth, the candles on the chimneypiece expiring in their sockets. The room was obscured with long, dark shadows, silent and lonely; and no one evidently had been there.

He had not then returned. Had O'Hara found him? Where was he? What had become of him?

Augusta hesitated not a moment longer, but hurrying down stairs opened a side-door in the back hall, and rushed out into the night.

It was a dark and stormy night; not a star was to be seen, and the wind howled in the branches of the tall trees of the avenue, sending forth notes, as of wild and of mournful lamentations, upon her ears. The clouds, driven in hurried confusion through the heavens, now obscured, now displayed the pale, sickly moon, wading through the rack. At times the darkness was almost total; at times the pale light fell between the branches, throwing dark, unearthly, flickering shadows upon the way.

The dark arch of the trees yawned as the black opening of a sepulcher; and, like specters on each side, they stood and tossed their bare and leafless boughs in the wind.

Such were the images presented to her mind, as down the walk she rushed, her head bare—a great shawl thrown over her, her undefined terrors and agitation increasing every moment.

It was impossible to distinguish any object distinctly in this sort of ghastly light and deep black shadow; but she kept searching hurriedly from side to side, hoping, in every darker shadow, to find him supported against some tree, or thrown upon the ground, or pacing up and down.

Often she stopped and listened for his footsteps, or for his groans.

In vain; nothing but the wild, loud, wailing blast, tossing the skeleton branches to the sky, like arms cast imploringly upward in their agony!

Not a sound—Fearful silence and fearful darkness! but that which would have made her nerves tremble at any other time was powerless now. She shook in every limb, but she hurried on.

Two miles this dismal avenue extended. The trees still so thick, and the night so obscure, that scarcely any light penetrated, except now and then when it dimly gleamed beneath the low, hanging branches. No object was to be seen.

At last, wearied and out of breath, her terrors increasing and her heart beating faster and faster, she was obliged to pause.

Then she stopped a few minutes, and again she listened.

She heard the dismal cry of a screech-owl, whose wild, sepulchral voice at that moment sounded from a distant wood, or rather shrubbery; and that low whispering among the branches and in the grass of the creatures, be they earthly or unearthly, who live and are astir at this time of night: she heard nothing else.

She began to tremble very much; but she went on again, still looking anxiously on every side, still stopping to listen. She would have given worlds to have been able to break the silence and call, but she could not—voice seemed denied her; she could not have uttered his name, she almost felt, to save both their lives.

The leaves crushed beneath her feet, the branches closed in darker and darker overhead, and the wind blew cold, and howled most lamentably.

Thus she proceeded at least a mile. And now she had at last reached a spot where this long monotonous line of trees opened, and was varied a little. Some of the trees had been blown down, and young ones had been planted in their places. Here, too, an old plantation joined up to the avenue, which had been interrupted; a kind of semi-circle had been cut in it, and the space thus obtained admitted light and air. In the centre of this semicircle stood a majestic oak-tree, which threw its magnificent arms far and wide, and under it a low circular mound of turf had been erected, which was intended to serve for a rural seat.

The light which fell upon the grassy opening only served to render the shadows still blacker and darker under the branches of this enormous tree, but the moon just then bursting from beneath a heavy cloud, cast one bright gleam upon it, and something black and darker than the surrounding darkness might be discerned, thrown, as it seemed, upon the ground.

She came up, and there he lay.

He was lying upon the ground, his arms folded, and resting against the little bank, and his face resting against them. He did

not move as she came up—he lay like one insensible or dead. But he was not dead; you might hear his low, stifled groans.

She went up to him—stood and looked at him, in silence, for a few moments; at last—

“Mr. Vavasour!” she said.

He started, sprang up instantly, and stood before her perfectly erect, but with such a face, such a look!—It was the image of despair—his outline was darkly visible against the sky, and the ghastly light of the moon fell full upon his features.

“Augusta!” was all he could at first say. “You, Augusta!”

“Yes, it is Augusta. Vavasour,” endeavoring to speak steadily, nay, with a certain indifference, but not so successful as she wished to be, “I was frightened for you—I thought I might find you dead.”

“It would have been better if you had,” said he, gloomily; “but I am not man enough to kill myself, I believe.”

Then he seemed gasping and trying to speak something more, but as if he could not; at last it burst forth, with a sort of passion:—

“Augusta—stop—listen—pity—tell me—Is all over? Is she gone? Is she dead?”

“No, she is in bed, and I left her asleep: I came to tell you. And now that you need not make yourselves any longer unhappy about each other,” she added, with much bitterness, “if you are tired of sitting under that tree, perhaps you will come back to the house, and let my father have his dinner.”

“Augusta, you have no pity.”

“I no pity!” said she.

“I don’t very well know what call there is for my pity!” she went on, the color mounting fast to her cheeks, as she looked at him.

“I don’t very well know what there is to excite my pity!”

His figure had relaxed from that kind of tension in which despair had held it, and he had now seated himself upon the turf seat before her. He looked miserably perplexed; but the fierce anguish of the first moment had subsided as soon as he had been assured of Angela’s safety. Augusta detected this change in his feelings, and it made her still more angry.

For him, he was feeling as he sat there, she standing before him, that some explanation ought immediately to be made of what had passed; and how to begin, or what to say, he did not know: a sort of awkward embarrassment had succeeded to the wild excitement of his first sensations; and as for Augusta’s temper, it was fast prevailing over sorrow.

"Let them go to dinner without us for once," at last he said, forcing himself to speak. "I owe you an explanation, Augusta, and I will give it you now, if you will hear me: but first, let me beg of you to tell me what is her real name."

"Her name! Good Heavens! can it be possible you do not even know her name?"

"I do not: tell it me, Augusta."

"Why, Nevil, to be sure!"

"Nevil! Nevil! you don't say so!" And starting up, catching both her hands, "Married or single? tell me that! tell me that!"

"Married! Why she's not twenty!—she's quite a child! Is this all you know about her?"

Augusta began to breathe.

"Indeed, Vavasour," she said, disengaging her hands, and her spirits beginning to recover themselves a little, "you have frightened and angered me very much, I confess—and I don't know what I am to think of all this—poor Angela shrieking and going into convulsions at the sight of you, and you darting away like a madman through the window. And, after all, it appears you know nothing about her—not even whether she be married or single!—Yet you owe me an explanation, sir, most assuredly, and no better time than the time present. Let them wait dinner, for once in their lives, and tell me at once all you know about it."

And so saying, she sat down upon the turf seat by his side.

He drew himself to a little distance from her—he seemed to shrink involuntarily away.

She marked the gesture, and changed color.

Then he turned, and looking steadily in her face, said—

"Answer me first one question: Is she single or married? And another, How came she here? I thought she had been in India."

"She never has been in India, or near India, in her life, that I know: and of course she is single. Joan Grant recommended her to my mother as a companion for me. She has been with us half a year; before that, she was governess at Mrs. Usherwood's."

Augusta, it must be confessed, ran through these details with what seemed a rather ill-natured pleasure.

"She's a very good girl," she concluded, in a tone in which the slightest possible degree of insolence might be detected, "that I must say; and I was getting very fond of her. She's really a good creature; and most certainly, I repeat, she is not married."

He looked up in her face, while she was saying this, with a curl of something very like contempt upon his lip; and when she had

ended he turned his face away, and bent his eyes upon the grass. He sighed deeply.

There was a fresh silence.

At last Augusta broke it by saying, with some impatience—

“And now, how long am I to wait for your explanation?”

“It will be soon made,” he said. “I am in love with this governess of Mrs. Usherwood’s, and domestic companion, and well-behaved girl of yours, and have been so for some time.”

“You are very hard,” she could not help saying—

“Not harder than you are,” answered he, bitterly. “But where is this governess?—this good girl? Have you turned her out of the house, or what have you done with her?”

“Watched her till she fell asleep—and loved her as my sister,” was her answer, in the tone of one deeply and cruelly hurt. “You will find out some time, Vavasour, that you have wronged me—wronged me in your good opinion, I mean; as for the other wrongs,” her cheek kindling, “I scorn to complain of *them*!”

And she rose up, and was going to leave him.

“Stay, Augusta,” catching hold of her dress. “Don’t go away—I beg your pardon—you made me angry by the way in which I thought you alluded to her station, as if you held her cheap upon that account. I beg your pardon, I have no right to be angry; stay and hear what I have to say.”

“No!” she said, trying to disengage herself; “when I came here I wished for an explanation—I want none now. Oh, oh, Vavasour!”

And then her poor, proud heart gave way, and she shed a few tears.

“Augusta! Augusta!—forgive me—forgive me!”

He let go her dress, buried his face between his hands, in an attitude of deep dejection; while she, wounded to the quick, no longer caring for any thing further, turned away and walked slowly homeward.

She let herself into the house, and went up stairs into her own room, and, once there, locked and double-locked the door, threw open the window, and resting her elbows upon the window-seat and her head upon her hands, sat there looking stupidly into the night.

It is, indeed, an awful moment when the conscience, suddenly aroused by an unexpected catastrophe, summons us before her tribunal, obliges us irresistibly to judge ourselves as we feel we should be judged by others, and all the vain sophistications with which we have been deluding our hearts vanish, and our conduct, in all its naked deformity, stands revealed before our eyes.

Oh, well may we call, in such an hour, upon the hills to hide us, and upon the mountains to cover us!

His anxiety with regard to Angela relieved, *his* conscience at last—late indeed, but at last aroused—had taken its turn to speak, and in plain terms enough. Light seemed to break suddenly upon his mind, and he began to view his conduct in its just and simple aspect. He had wronged both—had imposed upon both—deceived both; imposed upon, deceived, and cheated himself more than either. What right had he to view his early and undissolved contract with Augusta in the light he had chosen to do? What right had he to flatter himself, without due inquiry, that her indifference equaled his own, because he wished it so to be?

How culpable had been his indolent softness of temper! how blamable the procrastination in which his dread of domestic storms had led him to indulge; suffering this undecided and unsettled state of things to continue, for want of courage frankly to announce the state of his feelings!

What deceit he had practiced upon Angela!—meaning, it is true, no wrong to any one, but suffering himself to be blinded to the probable ill consequences of the childish romance in which he was indulging, by the idle whims and fancies of his raw and inexperienced character.

And, worst of all, what had he lastly done, under the irritation of a disappointed passion for another? He had madly confirmed his engagement with Augusta, and pledged himself, by every tie of honor, to a woman he knew he could never love.

It is, indeed, an awful moment of life when thus, after a long series of those self-deceptions, with which we have blinded ourselves to the culpability of some questionable course in which we have suffered ourselves to engage, in excuse pleading a thousand specious reasons to lull that voice within, which still cries, *Hold!*—a light irresistible flashes conviction upon our hearts, and our error, stripped of all this vain sophistry, stands exposed before us.

Oh, blest is he whose hidden eye is purged—whose conscience, piercing as a sharp sword dividing bones and marrow, thus discloses his true self ere yet too late—ere yet the day is utterly spent—“the night in which no man can work” has come; while the hour for reparation and amendment has not utterly passed, and the profitless tree still stands under the hand of the all-merciful Husbandman!

Humbled, softened, penitent, his thoughts turned with remorse to the woman he had so greatly wronged, of whose feelings he had

little thought in the paroxysm of his despair—nay, whom he but one short quarter of an hour ago treated so unfeelingly and harshly.

He longed to offer her any reparation in his power, and he rose to return to the house.

But then, what reparation could he offer?

His heart, he felt it, he knew it, was irretrievably another's. It was a mockery to offer the sacrifice of such an attachment, even if it had been possible to make it, to a woman like Miss Darby: even the mere idea of such a thing seemed an insult.

And then his Angela! his sweet, unprotected Angela! his betrothed bride! to whom he had declared his attachment, and passed his promise—was nothing due to her?

The more he reflected, the more confused his thoughts became, and the contest between conflicting duties the more hopeless. To return to the house under his present perplexity of feeling, seemed impossible: he must stay away for the night at least.

A night's reflection might tranquillize his nerves, and allow him time to arrange his thoughts.

Under the influence of his final impulse he had risen, and was proceeding down the avenue. Now he stopped and hesitated; then he turned round, and walking slowly in an opposite direction, approached the outer gate, and by it left the park.

CHAPTER XLVII.

I'll not offend thee with a vain tear more.

BEN JONSON.

HE walked for many hours, following the devious turnings of the little lanes that traversed the country in various directions, so entirely absorbed in his own thoughts that he heeded not the hours as they passed, nor observed that the moon had sunk behind the horizon, leaving only the stars to light him upon his way.

The night had become exceedingly cold, and the wind, rushing over these bare, unsheltered hills, was chilling and stiffening his limbs; but he seemed not to feel it.

His thoughts, once allowed to turn to Angela, found but too sweet and bitter occupation.

She was asleep—she was safe at present, and protected ; but how would she awaken, that dear, young, helpless girl ?

How would *she* regard the position in which they stood ?

She loved him still : yes, he was certain that she loved him.

That wild, beaming face of ecstasy ; those arms stretched forward, and that piercing cry, “Carteret ! Carteret !” The vision was before his eyes ; the sounds yet echoed in his ears !

Could he desert her ? would he desert her ?

No, never, never !

But what would *she* do ?

Would she, on her side, stand firm to their engagement, and, casting herself upon his truth and honor, call upon him to redeem his pledge ? That was what he believed, he hoped, would be the case. In the present weakness of his feelings, he would like thus to have been forced into the course his heart was panting to pursue. He seemed as if he wanted strength resolutely to adopt it of himself.

But then, again—Augusta. Had he not passed his promise to Augusta in a manner equally sacred, and had he not been accepted in equal reliance upon his good faith ? And had he not here, alas ! excited all the warm, honest affections of a heart, with all its faults, most sincere and generous ? But at this thought he clenched his hands furiously together, and rushed onward, with a sort of frantic wildness, through the night, till, quite wearied and worn out, he at length paused on finding himself approaching a village. There was a small and very inconsiderable-looking public-house, standing by the way-side, of which, late as it was, the door was not yet closed. He entered, and asked if they could give him a bed. A middle-aged woman, the mistress of the house, was just putting up her shutters, preparatory to retiring to rest. She eyed him with some surprise, for he was without a hat, his hair disheveled, his white waistcoat and dinner-dress defiled with the earth on which he had groveled, and his whole appearance exhibiting the greatest disorder. His demeanor, however, was so perfectly gentle, and his manner so calm, that, after the first glance, she felt assured that he was neither a madman nor a fugitive criminal ; so she answered him civilly, that there was a well-aired bed at his service : upon which he came in, and, feeling extremely cold and exhausted, approached the embers of the expiring fire, and sat down.

“Have you met with any accident, sir ?” said the good woman ; “your clothes and things seem in a sad plight !”

“Yes,” said he ; “a serious one.”

“Was there any thing could be done, any one be sent ?”

"No;" all he wanted was a quiet single room and a bed.

While it was preparing, he sat down by the kitchen fire; she fetched her bellows, and soon blew up a cheerful blaze; and he extended his limbs, now aching with the cold, before it.

He sat thus, with a sort of feeling of stupid comfort, until the good woman entering, with a candle in her hand, told him all was ready, and ushered him into a very small but neat little chamber, with its red-checked tent-bed and yellow-stained walls, and there left him to his own reflections.

Angela awoke about midnight.

The curtains were drawn round her bed, and the light, which came from a candle burning upon a small table by the fire, was shaded from her eyes; but the fire was burning brightly as if it had lately been mended, and some one was sitting by it.

She awoke as from a heavy, dreamless slumber; and slowly and like pale shadows, first dim and indistinct, but gradually assuming form and connection, the events of the preceding evening seemed to arrange themselves in groups before her mind.

But vivid as the recollection seemed, she yet doubted whether what had passed was real, and whether she had not been cheated by some delusion of her spirits. Could it be possible—could the form she had seen really be that of Carteret? Was it an apparition formed by her own senses, or had the grave for once restored its dead? or had he, indeed, in spite of his desertion, been living all this time, and mocked her tears by his cruel silence? Could he have had the heart, knowing the unhappy circumstances in which she and Margaret stood—in sickness and poverty, utterly friendless, as well as penniless—could he have had the heart to desert them? But then if really living, and not some unreal phantom, how came he to start up, as it appeared to her, suddenly, from the bowels of the earth, before her at such a moment? And how came she never to have heard his name mentioned, or once suspected his intimacy with the family of Mr. Darby?

Confused, dizzy, almost questioning her own identity, still doubting whether she was awake or asleep, she stretched out her hand, as if to assure herself that she was really not dreaming, and laying hold of the bed-curtain, drew it gently toward her.

The opened curtain allowed her a view of the fire-place, and of a figure sitting by it in an arm-chair, leaning back, not asleep, as it would seem by the attitude, but in deep thought.

The rings of the curtain jingling against the rod aroused Au-

gusta, for she it was. She rose, and came up to the bedside; but her face was so pale, her countenance so dark, that Angela, letting fall the curtain, hastily exclaimed:

"What can be the matter with you, dearest Augusta?"

"Have you forgotten what has happened yourself?" said Augusta, standing by the bed-side, and looking down on her friend with what Angela thought a strange, scrutinizing expression in her eyes.

"I don't know; I believe not," said she, passing her hand over her forehead, and endeavoring to collect her thoughts. "I have had a strange dream—a thought—a vision! and oh! oh, Augusta!" starting suddenly up in her bed, clasping her hands, the blood mounting into her cheeks, and with eyes imploring, "tell me—tell me—it was not all a dream! tell me it was Carteret I saw; tell me he is not dead!"

"What did you dream?" asked Augusta, coldly.

"I dreamed—nay, now I feel sure," she cried, straining her eyes toward her friend, as if beseeching her to confirm the truth of her impression, "I am certain I did see Mr. Carteret, standing up in your very drawing-room; he was there, I thought, before me, as I came in after you. I saw him as plain as I see you now—yes, I am certain—now, I am sure I did. After that, all seems confusion; a horrid, stifling, dark, dreadful dream of I know not what. I thought I heard him calling me, but my soul seemed gone I knew not where, and I could not answer. But it was his voice—say so; say it *was* his voice! He called me 'love!' and 'life!' Didn't he? Oh! I can never mistake *his* voice; there never was such another!" And she began to weep.

Then she went on again:

"Then, Augusta, tell me whether it wasn't so. I seemed to open my eyes again: I saw you there, Augusta, and I saw him standing before me with such a look; and then it is all wild confusion, and I see and know nothing more."

"But I am sure, sure I saw him," she kept repeating. "Tell me; nay, do tell me; for the love of Heaven do speak, Augusta. Did I not see him, and did you not see him too?"

But Augusta could resist these pleading, earnest looks no longer.

"Yes, I saw him," she forced herself to say.

"You did? Ah, Heaven!"

And suddenly sinking down in her bed, she covered her face up in the covering, and lay quite still, weeping silently.

Augusta stood watching her, as still and almost as cold as a statue; all her feelings seemed turning to stone. She felt not the

slightest sympathy with Angela; but neither did she feel jealous or angry; she was hardened and stupefied.

Long Angela lay weeping there, her head buried in the covering. Tears of gratitude they were. That he was alive was enough. Every doubt which had perplexed her, every uncertainty, seemed to vanish from her mind. He was alive; it was enough. She was mingling her thanksgivings and her prayers. Calmed at length, she uncovered her face; and too much exhausted, now the first excitement of her joy was over, again to sit up in bed, she stretched out her hand to take that of Augusta, and cast up her affectionate eyes to seek sympathy in those of her friend: but the eyes were averted, and the hand was icy cold.

"What is the matter, dearest Augusta? You look I do not know how to-night; or is it the flare of the candle? for my eyes are so weak," passing her hand over them. "Has any thing vexed you? I am so sorry. But first, first, before you tell me of yourself—dearest Augusta, forgive me if I am selfish—tell me, do tell me, it was Mr. Carteret; say it again. And how, how could he possibly come here?"

"Is it possible, Angela, or are you deceiving me? 'Possibly come here!' Don't you know who he is?"

"Oh, I know well who he is; his name is Carteret. You know we were engaged to each other. But that he should come here, just at this very moment too! And now," said she, timidly, and anxiously, "just tell me, is he here still? He wouldn't go away; he couldn't leave me so. Did he say any thing? or—or—or—perhaps he has forgotten me."

Augusta had suddenly dropped her hand when she mentioned her engagement; then again her heart relented at the sight of that sincere, earnest face, in which deceit or treachery never could have found a place; and still averting her eyes, she forced herself to say:

"No, he does not seem to have forgotten you; he was very much distressed at your illness. But you don't mean me to believe that you have no idea what he is?"

"Yes, I know quite well; he is an artist. I know what many people of your rank feel about artists," said she, coloring, and mistaking the expression of her friend's face. "They look down upon them; but I never did. Why should I? I was proud—the proudest creature on earth, in his affection."

"An artist! What do you mean by an artist?" said Augusta, impatiently. "Who put *that* into your head?"

“He told me so?”

“Oh, he is unquestionably a fine artist, as far as invention can make one,” said Augusta, sarcastically.

“But I am so surprised that he should come here—that you should seem to know him! What could he be come for? And never to have chanced to mention his name before! Oh, Augusta! what hours and hours of sorrow I should have escaped, if I could but have known that he was alive!”

“Carteret is not the name he usually goes by,” said Augusta.

“How is that? Has he changed his name? What a pity I never knew it! But what is he come here for? To paint your picture for Mr. Vavasour, perhaps.”

Augusta turned suddenly away, and stood with her back to the bed; while, Angela, without attending to that sudden change of posture, kept running on—

“But no matter—no matter why he came; he was *there*. And now, pray, pray tell me all that passed; pray, pray tell me what he said and did. Did he seem still at liberty? And, oh, did he seem to care for me still? And, oh, did he in the least explain his strange, strange silence?”

“You ask so many questions at once,” said Augusta in a troubled voice, and her face changing into all sorts of hues—now pale, now red, now crimson, now like death; but she kept it resolutely turned away. “Yes, I suppose—yes, he may be—yes, he *is*. How should I know any thing about him or his feelings? What do I care for them now? What is he, or you, or any thing, to me?”

At another time the strange manner of her friend would have alarmed her, but now she seemed not to notice it. At the assurance of his affection she drew the counterpane suddenly over her face, and again gave way to happy tears. When she uncovered her face again, Augusta had retreated to the fire; she leaned her head over the bedside and began once more—

“Dear Miss Darby, have patience with me. Pray what o’clock is it?”

“Between one and two,” said Augusta.

“So late! I was thinking I might get up and go down stairs—how silly! But he is still here, you said, didn’t you? He will be here in the morning; I may see him then, mayn’t I?”

“Yes, yes; you shall see him if he is here.”

She seemed satisfied with this assurance, ungraciously as it was given.

“It so puzzles me about the names!” and, covering her face

again, she lay long quite still and silent. By and by, she lifted up her head, and again said—

“It so puzzles me about the names!”

Augusta had been sitting motionless by the fire all this time, in debate with herself. She felt that she had better, perhaps, at once put an end to this conversation, and leave Angela in ignorance of what had happened till the morning, when a good night's rest might have prepared her better to support the shock; but she was agitated by that restless impatience to have the worst out at once, which seems to render further delay insupportable. To remain longer struggling with her feelings and not betray herself, she knew was impossible; to go away to bed without the relief of speaking out seemed what she could not force herself to do. “Besides,” thought she, “I had better tell her myself; Maria, or some of the servants, will be blabbing it out before I can get to her in the morning—better have it out at once, she looks able to bear it now.”

She got up, therefore, again from her chair by the fire, and went up to the bedside. She stood looking at Angela a few seconds; then, suddenly laying her hand upon Angela's shoulder, said in a trembling voice, which she endeavored in vain to render steady—

“Are you indeed as ignorant as you pretend to be upon this subject, or do you really want to know his true name?”

“What's the matter? How you speak!” cried Angela, suddenly turning round, disengaging herself, and fixing her eyes in astonishment upon Augusta's face. “What can there be so much in his name?”

“Every thing!” said Augusta. “His name is—Vavasour!”

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Since then some higher destinies command,
Let us not strive nor labor to withstand
What is past help.

HENRY KING.

Vavasour to Augusta.

“I AM lying upon my bed, from which it is impossible for me at present to rise. The horror of such thoughts as mine, when thus abandoned to their unmitigated intensity, you will understand; but

I do not hope, I do not ask you to pity. I have deluded myself and others by a vain romance; I have departed from the beaten road of truth and sincerity, and, like all such wanderers, find myself driven back by the furies of shame and self-reproach: too happy, Augusta, if I have not made others as wretched as I have made myself.

"After the scene of yesterday in your mother's dressing-room, when I proffered a heart which I thought was truly yours—how dare I confess what I feel!—I ought long ago to have confessed that I adore—have ever—ever shall—ever must"

This letter was torn up.

Why, perhaps it might be hard to say, except that a man in the wretched situation in which Carteret found himself feels it impossible to do any one thing to his own satisfaction. He tried again.

"Will Augusta Darby, after all that has passed, have the generosity to send one line to the most wretched and criminal of Heaven's creatures, and tell him how *she* has passed the night? I dare not inquire after *you*. Are you still together?"

This letter was at length dispatched by a boy belonging to the house; and this effort having been made, the miserable man, turning upon his pillow, lay watching the waving boughs of some trees as they played before the window, or the rain-drops of a sudden shower which had fallen, coursing down the panes one after the other—the aching pains which now spread over his body serving in some degree to divert the anguish of his mind, and the weariness and exhaustion consequent upon feelings so violently excited occasioning a dull, heavy stupor, which was almost like repose.

He waited with less impatience than he could have thought possible, for the return of his messenger; and it was well—for the boy, according to the usual habit of all errand boys that ever were sent, chose to make a four-hours' business of two.

He had not been delayed by the length of the answer; it was still more brief than the missive he bore.

"We are together. She knows all. We are both composed—more so than we could have hoped. You have not robbed us of our mutual friendship."

Honor to the heart!

Honor and praise to the affectionate and loyal heart! Honor, and

praise, and thanksgiving, to the heart which can triumph over the contradictions of self-interest, the bitter influences of jealousy and envy, the fierce ordeal of rival love, and can maintain itself equitable, sincere, affectionate, and true !

Honor to these two dear girls !

The one, trained and disciplined by adversity, and purified and sanctified by piety.

The other, warm, genial, generous, and high—the handiwork of prodigal Nature.

Both just, both loyal, both brave, both in their noble disinterestedness raised far above all the mean influences, the fierce and stormy passions, the cruel dissensions, and the still more cruel alienation, to which their unhappy circumstances were calculated to give birth.

They had parted that night with few words ; for what could either say ?

But the warm embrace—the passionate strain of her poor, feeble arms—with which Angela flung herself upon Augusta's bosom ; the flood of warm, honest tears with which it had been bathed ; had melted all the ice of Augusta's heart ; and the deep, earnest, throbbing pressure, with which she had returned her friend's embraces, with her pale, dark face, bent in silence over her, told what she suffered, and what she could forgive. Not one syllable was exchanged, for both their hearts were full. One more affectionate embrace, and the parting for the night had been made.

They got through the night, on their several sides, in their several ways ; Augusta striving to summon up all the force of her pride, all the native loftiness of her heart, to support her under the sacrifice she expected would be demanded of her.

Angela, in humble self-distrust, and earnest prayers for strength for that sacrifice she had resolved to make.

The generous disinterestedness of her resolves supported her during this terrible night in a way that the selfish, the unjust, the impious, and the rebellious, shall never know ; and she entered Augusta's room in the morning, grave, and, it is true, pale, and bearing in her faded cheeks but too sure a testimony of the agonies she had endured—but serene, composed, gentle, affectionate, resolved to sacrifice herself to her friend.

Augusta's struggles had been more violent, and her crimson temples, the dark, gloomy expression of her eyes, and a sort of desperate patience in her manner, told of one who had made up her mind to

submit to inevitable necessity, or rather to endure the torture without complaint.

Angela indeed felt elevated at this crisis of her life—to the one grand sacrifice which prefers the happiness of another to its own. Her gratitude—her deep, intense gratitude to Augusta for all the affectionate kindness she had shown her; the interest which had been awakened in her feelings, by the share she had taken in the story of her love, were now excited to the highest enthusiasm by what she thought the generous manner in which Miss Darby upon this occasion had treated her—she, the dependant, the inferior, suddenly elevated to be her most dangerous rival.

She had lain awake all that night, weighing the claims of both sides; and she had brought herself to conclude against herself that it was her duty to give way.

Here we come to another of those problems of human life so difficult to solve.

It is easy for the generous heart and the sensitive conscience to solve them, by solving them against itself; but the question is not, can we, but ought we, to make the sacrifice where the happiness of a third person is concerned?

The rights of love are in most cases indisputable. Reciprocal affection is a claim with which no other seems justified in interfering; and yet there are cases, and many, many cases, where the rule will not hold.

She thought this one.

She was perhaps influenced by many feelings that ought not, in such a case, so strongly to have influenced her. If it were so, let the error be adored. It was the fault of a high, noble, heroic, grateful nature, whose lofty instincts there was no one to control; and it cost her pangs, far, far bitterer than those of death itself.

She loved Augusta Darby; she had so long forgotten to think of her own happiness after that cruel blight which had weaned her from the interests of this world, that she literally had acquired the habit of living in that of others, and in that of Augusta Darby more than all. She could not forget all the innumerable acts of generosity, tenderness, and affection, with which Augusta had made her so happy—that it was she who had restored her to what she was—that her strength, health, beauty, all the gifts she had now to bestow upon Carteret, were Augusta's—that to her partiality it was owing that she even was there—to the generous equality she had maintained between them, that she was present at this meeting. She might have been dismissed long ago, when her services as an in-

structress proved so little to be wanted; she had been retained by her friend's affection, to prove the destroyer of her peace.

Then she had been in the habit of being unhappy; Augusta was born for prosperity and joy. Should she cast a cloud over those brilliant prospects, which, but a few short hours ago, were a source of such ineffable bliss?

Should hers, in return for all she had received, be the hand to dash the cup just hovering before her lips to atoms?

No, she could not, and she would not do it.

Carteret had been dead to her; she had been accustomed to separation and sorrow.

"Oh, but," said her pleading heart, "what was that? His memory was mine still. But to be another's! not even to dare to think of him—not dare to treasure even his image in my heart!

"O Thou, who hast made this heart so feeble and infirm of purpose, be Thy strength perfected in my weakness!"

Such had been the reflections, such the struggles, of the night.

Toward the morning, exhausted, she had fallen into a sleep: a sleep it was of innocence and peace—such sleep as guardian angels watch over.

She awoke refreshed, composed, determined, and prepared to complete the sacrifice she had resolved upon.

It was for Angela now to enter Augusta's room and watch her bedside, slumbering as she hoped to find her.

But Augusta had not closed her eyes.

Her struggle with herself had been bitter and long. It was more difficult than Angela's.

Her love for Vavasour seemed rooted in her heart, entwined with every fiber of her being; her very frame shook with agony at the thought of giving him up forever. And then to these feelings were added the cruel pangs of jealousy, of indignant pride—the sense of injustice, the still more cruel sense of having been duped and trifled with. All these were warring in her heart, and where should she find strength by which they should be overcome? She had never been accustomed to seek shelter under those eternal wings, beneath whose shadow is peace and quiet of heart—to cleave steadfastly to that Master whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light.

It had been a night of fierce struggle and anguish: she was not, like Angela, striving to offer up what she yet might hold, but to submit with dignity to the loss of that which she felt would be wrested from her.

She had conquered, in a manner, at last; but there she was lying haggard and disfigured with the tortures she had undergone; her eyes dry and stony, her lips parched, and her cheeks darkened rather than pale, when Angela, gentle and grave, came softly into the room, and with eyes peaceful and serene, though melancholy, seemed to bend over her pillow, like some pitying angel.

The greatest difficulty with Augusta had been the idea of meeting Angela again—to reconcile herself to the agonizing thought of seeing a successful rival in the friend she had loved like a sister.

The gentle melancholy, the serene resignation, in Angela's eyes, told her, at least, that the emotions of the night had not yielded to the brighter hopes of the morning, and that Angela found it impossible to be happy at her friend's expense.

They gave each other their hands and exchanged a tender pressure, and then Angela sat down upon her friend's bed, and turning her face a little away, so that the trembling of her lips and her changing color might not be seen, she said, with all the composure she could command—

“I have taken my resolution, dear Augusta.”

Good girl! she was anxious to announce it as soon as possible, to pledge herself irrevocably while she had the strength; she was humble, she knew her own weakness, she silenced her own faltering, pleading heart.

“I do not know whether I have judged rightly, but I have prayed for guidance, and that I might find strength to do that which was best for all. Mr. Carteret and I are henceforth strangers.”

Augusta shook her head, and turned it away upon her pillow, muttering—

“Good, good girl! but that can never, never be.”

“It must be,” said Angela, with more steadiness; “and it shall be. No hopes shall be cheated, no pledges broken, no long-treasured expectation disappointed, for my sake. My love had long been buried in the grave—to the grave let it return. Augusta—Miss Darby, rather would I lie in that grave this day myself than make the best and kindest of friends unhappy.”

“Far, far, rather would I be there now,” thought she. “And, oh, that its kind bosom would open to receive me, and bury me and my misfortunes at once!”

She had summoned resolution to pronounce the promise; but that once done, her spirits gave way, and her very heart seemed to be dissolving within her. She stopped, she tried to gather breath, and went on.

"And, therefore, receive my pledge, Augusta, that I will never, unless for your sake, and at your express desire, see Mr. Carteret again. And this you never will desire, for I resign all claim I may possess upon his heart to you. He loved you yesterday; he will soon love you again."

She stopped a few moments; a few tears fell; then, with ineffable sweetness bending over her friend's pillow, she kissed her, and said, "May the God I earnestly desire to love and serve bless you, and make you happy, my dear Augusta!"

They spent the morning in their own rooms, both feeling it impossible to appear at breakfast after what had passed.

Mrs. Darby had also kept her room; she had, indeed, taken to her bed—a usual resource with her in all cases of difficulty. She was very much puzzled with all that had passed, and had applied in vain to her daughter for explanation. Augusta, not accustomed to attend to her mother so much as she ought—as the most lively and intelligent of daughters is bound by duty to attend, even to the most tedious and tiresome of mothers—had put her off in a hurry the night before, with a promise that every thing should be explained in the morning.

Mrs. Darby had therefore been forced to go to bed, where she lay very uneasy, ruminating upon what had passed, and unable to make any thing of it.

She asked her maid at last, who was sitting with her, to go and inquire after Mr. Vavasour, and whether he was come in again, and was horror-struck at receiving the intelligence that he had neither come back nor sent for his things.

Her first inquiry, when she opened her eyes the next morning, was whether Mr. Vavasour was yet returned; and being, of course, answered in the negative, she, who was a great questioner of her maid, and was in the habit of applying to her when she wanted information, began to ask Mrs. Lewis what had really happened.

"For," said she, "my poor nerves were thrown into so much confusion, and there was such a noise and clatter, and that poor thing rolling about in such a horrible manner, that I could make nothing of it, nor in the least understand why Mr. Vavasour made a dash at the window, and ran off in that shocking manner."

"Why, madam," answered Mrs. Lewis, "if you ask me about it, to be sure I must tell you the whole truth, and all I gathered from Mrs. Nurse there, who, you know, was sent for, and who, after Miss Nevil was put to bed, came down for some warm water or

something, and was in such a fluster and such a pucker that I never saw the like !”

“ Dear me !” said Mrs. Darby ; “ so you really do know something about this matter, Lewis ? To think of my being so foolish as not to have asked *you* last night ! But I was so dizzy, and in such a perfect whirl, I didn’t know what I did. Well, you got it out of that old woman, I conceive. How was it ?”

“ Why, as for getting it all out of her, madam, that is more than I can pretend to say it was possible to do ; for the old woman is so cross and so huffy, and so jealous if one ventures to speak of Miss Nevil, her master’s daughter, as she chooses to call her, that I’m sure I find it quite disagreeable to converse with her, and never do, except once or twice, when I’ve asked her up to take a cup of tea, or stepped down to look at those young children. You know, madam, it’s rather insipid in the country, and one wants lap-dogs, or cats, or children, or something to make it a little lively.”

“ You need not go over all that again, Lewis,” said her mistress, rather impatiently. “ You’ve told me long ago all you learned about Miss Nevil being an officer’s daughter, and so good, and poor, and interesting, and all that sort of thing ; but, for goodness’ sake, without further preface, do tell me what you learned about last night, for I am really dying to hear,” added Mrs. Darby, with a great deal more appearance of interest than she was usually in the habit of showing.

“ Well, madam, I believe Miss Nevil ain’t Miss Nevil at all, but is all along married to Mr. Vavasour, and that he’s forsaken her, being all the time in love with Miss Darby—as who wouldn’t be who could make a comparison between the two ? To say nothing of one being a large fortune and the other a beggar.”

“ Married !” cried Mrs. Darby, starting up from her pillow ; “ you don’t say so !. Married ! actually married ! You don’t mean Nurse positively said so ?”

“ I won’t positively swear it,” said Lewis, drawing in. “ I won’t positively be certain Nurse said it, in so many words ; but that’s what I understood. For she went grumbling and marching about, and abusing Mr. Vavasour, whom she called Mr. Carteret, all the time, and saying how he’d betrayed the sweetest young lady as ever was seen, and talked about being married, *I* thought.”

“ Oh, they’re not married, depend upon it, if that’s all you heard,” said Mrs. Darby, recovering her spirits, and sinking upon her down pillows again. “ Promise of marriage, more likely. Are you sure old Nurse didn’t say ‘ promise ?’ ”

“ Well, now I recollect, I think she did say ‘promise.’ I won’t be sure of it.”

“ But I will,” cried Mrs. Darby, with sudden energy. “ Lewis, get me up, and put me on my *douillette*—the one lined with pink will do. I really am so agitated and nervous I can’t bear to put on my stays. Is the fire lighted in my dressing-room? Get me up there, and then I’ll send to Miss Nevil and have it all out of her myself; for one may as well talk to the winds as to Miss Darby.”

Her orders were obeyed. She was soon enveloped in her *douillette*, and, with an elegant invalid cap upon her head, sinking back in her *chaise longue*, she waited with less equanimity than was usual for the appearance of Miss Nevil, an audience with whom she had sent to demand in her own chamber.

The messenger dispatched by Mrs. Darby found Angela and Augusta sitting by the fire in Miss Darby’s room. Augusta, in her arm-chair, her feet resting upon the fender; Angela employed at her needle, making a frock for her little Lucy.

This good young mother of a family, ever industrious and thrifty, to whom time, with the numerous calls upon her which she had to satisfy, was so truly precious, was in such habits of constant employment, that her resource in any time of trouble was the employment of her fingers—a habit which, perhaps more than any of the smaller habits, contributes to the composure of the nerves, and renders a woman mistress of herself.

Through the fingers, as Pestalozzi, with his usual sagacity, remarks, half the education of a woman ought to be made. Her delicate and excitable brain refuses to lend itself to any very long-continued or strenuous mental exertion; by brief flashes she receives her ideas; by her quick perceptions and her lively instincts arrives at truths, to the laborious pursuit of which she is rarely equal. She can not, like her more robust and less spiritual companion, devote the whole of her working hours with impunity to mental toil; the too delicate machinery breaks or hardens under the continuous effort; and if she do not contrive to change her nature and become a regular pedant in petticoats, her nerves and spirits are generally seriously impaired by efforts so little in accordance with her temperament.

Let her, therefore, provide herself with abundance of employment for her subtile and pliant fingers, and she will find, that while drawing, or painting, or embroidering, or knitting, or sewing, her

spirits will compose, her nerves will settle, her thoughts will arrange themselves, and her intellect will strengthen.

Let the woman read, and let her read attentively and well; but let her shun the danger of the present day, *idle reading*; let her shun *trash*, be it learned trash, or romantic trash, or political trash; let her beware of fancying she is improving or extending the powers of her mind while thus employed. She is doing nothing but relaxing and weakening the powers of her body. Let her provide herself with active and useful employment to fill up a large portion of every day, and feed and enlarge her mind by reading books worth reading during the other; and let her read with selection and select with care. At all events, if she choose to employ her time in reading without selection, let her not think she is employing herself well.

Angela had never found time in the course of her strenuous life to waste in this pernicious manner, and therefore she had read with a degree of profit very rare in her sex. That judicious stepmother of hers had early directed her taste in this respect to the best and choicest authors, which Angela had read with a pleasure, relish, and enjoyment the idle loungee over books can never have. But her life was no ordinary one, to be sure; she had always so much to do for others that she had no time to fritter away.

And now, while Augusta—who wasted days and hours by handfuls, and never took time into account in any one of her schemes or plans, passing it by unheeded, as a thing almost totally without value—is resting, half sitting, half lying, thrown backward, in that arm-chair of hers, wearying herself by the constant change of distressing thoughts, which, unchecked and undiverted, in painful succession, chase each other through her brain—while her heart, strong as it once was, beats irregularly, and her nerves and spirits, robust as they are by nature, are rapidly giving way—Angela, of frame so delicate, nerves so excitable, and heart so fluttering and so tender to impressions, soothed by the regular monotony of the employment in which she is engaged, is composing her thoughts, strengthening her purposes, soothing her heart with the sweet balms of patience, and preparing herself in the stillness of her strength, for the generous part she has resolved upon.

Thus they were sitting perfectly silent; for what could they say?

Their hearts were full of one subject, in that pause of the course of events which left them nothing to do but to wait in patience for what was to come next.

Mrs. Lewis knocked at the door, and opening it at Augusta's "Come in!" presented herself, with Mrs. Darby's compliments, and she wished to speak to Miss Nevil in her dressing-room.

Angela colored, and her heart beat a little; but she got up without saying a word, and followed Mrs. Lewis to the apartment.

Mrs. Darby's dressing-room was one of the few really comfortable apartments in this large and desolate house; that lady, in her languid and indifferent way, usually managing to accumulate around herself such comforts as chance or the providence of others threw in the way, though she wanted the energy to provide them for herself.

It was a sort of instinctive animal selfishness—not the result of calculation, certainly not of thought; she naturally preferred her own comfort to that of other people—she only followed nature, good creature! that was all.

However, the dressing-room looked comfortable; there was not that air of cold destitution and emptiness which distinguished the other apartments. There was a warm, soft carpet, two or three handsome pieces of furniture against the walls, hanging wardrobes, and so on; there were a few tables, littered with a few books, pictures, trinkets, and bits of china, and in the middle a vase of flowers, but they were faded. Mrs. Lewis had forgotten to renew them, and her mistress had forgotten to tell her. There were a great many sofas, arm-chairs, *chaises longues*, bee-hive chairs, footstools, and matters of that description.

This soft indolent temper had, however, its advantages; and certainly, as far as regarded Mrs. Darby's dependants, was much to be preferred before acerbity and activity, which in minds so ill trained as that lady's would, in all probability, have gone together; and it was an especial relief to Angela, in the painful and embarrassing position in which she stood, to be received with—

"My dear Miss Nevil—excessively sorry to give you the trouble to come"—(yawning)—"but I've had a really terrible bad night, and I am all upon the fidgets till I've questioned you, and talked to you, and heard how it all is, and that sort of thing. Pray sit down, my dear."

For Angela remained respectfully standing.

"Lewis, push that arm-chair this way—there, now we shall be comfortable. You may leave us, Lewis; when I want you, I'll ring."

Lewis departed, casting a look of mingled curiosity and suspicion upon Miss Nevil, and dying to know whether she was maid, wife,

or widow; but she was forced to take herself and her curiosity away.

"And now, my dear," began Mrs. Darby, as soon as Angela was seated, "do tell me at once what all that fuss last night was really about. I declare it all passed before my eyes with such dazzling rapidity that I was electrified, and quite seemed to lose my senses; I could only stand there terrified to death, to see you throwing yourself about in that horrid manner. Are you used to fits, my dear? I wish you could help having them in the drawing-room, it looks so odd before every body. Well, I concluded it was seeing Mr. Vavasour that made you go off in that strange manner. And now, my dear Miss Nevil, you must excuse me, but I must beg to be informed, and without disguise, what you and Mr. Vavasour have to do with one another?"

"Nothing henceforward, madam," said Angela.

"Nothing henceforward!" repeated Mrs. Darby; "that's very well—a great deal better than I had been led to fear. But what have you been to each other in former days? I really must beg to know; and why you made that horrid shriek when you saw him—I think I hear it now. I never heard any thing so startling in my life!" said Mrs. Darby, raising her delicate white hands to her ears, as if she would thus shut out the recollection.

"I was taken by surprise—I thought Mr. Carteret—I mean Mr. Vavasour—was dead," said Angela.

"What will you call him Carteret for? And as for thinking Mr. Vavasour dead, why you must have heard poor Augusta talking of him every day."

"I never knew him under the name of Vavasour."

"Oh! what!" cried Mrs. Darby, rising suddenly in her chair, and sitting upright: "never knew him under his true name? Where in this world could you have met him, then?"

"In a remote part of ——shire, where I was living then, with my father's widow."

"——shire! why that's the county where his father's family seat lies—every body knows him there, Miss Nevil!" said Mrs. Darby, now fairly aroused. "I fear you are imposing upon me. It is impossible that a man of so much consequence should have been unknown in that part of the world. You should *place* your romance better," added Mrs. Darby, with more emphasis than was usual in her discourse.

"Indeed, madam," said Angela, "what I tell you is the simple truth. It was a most retired out-of-the-way spot, where I and

the mother of those poor children you have been so very kind to were living. How Mr. Carteret—Mr. Vavasour—chanced to come there I never knew."

"Come there!—chanced to come there! How often did he chance to come there? And under a feigned name, too—or as good!—though Carteret be really one of his names. It was given him after a *ci-devant* friend of Lord Missenden's, with whom he had a desperate quarrel afterward, and so he never suffered his son even to sign himself by that name, except in law things, and so on; and it's true he might just as well have called himself that as Hobson, or Dobson, or any thing, if he wanted to disguise himself. But I hope he didn't come very often, Miss Nevil, with his fine assumed name: for, let me tell you, young gentlemen of his age and rank seldom change names, and run after pretty girls of your years, with a good purpose."

Angela colored, but it was not the crimson of guilt. Obtuse as Mrs. Darby's perceptions usually were, she saw distinctly that there was any thing but the confusion of guilt in her face.

"He came, madam, pretty frequently during a few weeks, with the most benevolent purpose, to visit my poor mother, who was dying of a consumption, and to"

"And for what else? Something else, I'll be sworn.—Catch young men nowadays visiting the sick through pure charity!"

"To teach me to draw."

Mrs. Darby flung herself back in her arm-chair, and let her hands fall upon her lap, with an expression of unbounded amazement; not so much at the tale itself, as at what she thought the unparalleled assurance of Miss Nevil in endeavoring to palm it upon her.

"Teach to draw! Well, he is a mighty fine artist, that we know of old. And did he try to teach you nothing else, young woman?"

Angela colored again.

"Yes, madam, and he succeeded; he taught me to esteem him."

"And nothing more, my dear?"

"That I do not feel obliged to answer."

"But that—*that*, my good girl, is precisely the question I, his kinswoman, and the mother of his future *bride*, feel myself particularly bound to desire you *will* answer."

"I have heard," continued Mrs. Darby, at length thoroughly aroused, and as she lost her indolence, at the same time losing her patience and temper, "I have heard that there has been an infamous engagement passed between you—some say you actually

married him, others, you only promised to marry. Which is true? or is either true?"

"Whatever engagement there might have been is at an end," said Angela, steadily. "I have assured Miss Darby of this, I now beg to assure you of it. It is very natural you should be anxious to have satisfaction upon a point that concerns dear Miss Darby's happiness. I assure you, madam, I make no claim upon Mr. Carteret—Mr. Vavasour—that can in any way interfere with it. I thought him a man of my own condition when I pledged my promise to him. I find he is not what I believed him to be, and I consider myself, and consequently him, at liberty."

"You don't say so!" cried Mrs. Darby, much relieved, and at once recovering her usual easy good humor. "Do you know, I think this is particularly nice of you, my dear Miss Nevil!"

Angela was silent.

"Perhaps you don't know all about it yet, and so I will tell you. It would have been the awkwardest thing in the world if you had persisted in your claim—if, indeed, any claim you had. I don't know what Lady Missenden would have done. I verily believe she would have been beside herself, and ready to strangle you, if you had interfered with her son's prospects. She's quite different from me; not like me and Augusta at all; though I'm, of course, very anxious about Augusta, and all that: but she—she's perfectly wild if any thing goes amiss about her son!"

Still Angela remained silent.

"You know if you've got a written promise, or so forth—and he's really foolish enough to give any thing of the sort . . . : he is the strangest young man I ever saw in my life! . . . but they have brought him up in such a way!—and were you to come and put yourself in between him and Augusta, you can't conceive what mischief you might do him."

"Him!"

"Why, la! child, don't look in that silly way! *Him*, to be sure! You have no idea, it seems. Then I must tell you, his father's dead ruined, and won't have an acre left, I verily believe, when all's settled. And I suppose you know Miss Darby's a great fortune, though her father and I are not particularly over rich?"

This view of the subject had never suggested itself before—indeed, how should it? She knew nothing of Mr. Vavasour's circumstances, or the need there was for Miss Darby's fortune. She had thought little of the difference in their respective conditions, she had never weighed that among her other considerations.

Under some circumstances this additional reason for surrendering every claim she might have upon Carteret's heart might have been a source of great additional distress, but in the present case it was a relief. She felt glad to have additional strength given to the reasons which had decided her in the renunciation. When we have undertaken a very difficult task, it is always a relief to the mind to have the motives for it strengthened.

The harassing doubts that had perplexed her before, as to whether she had any right to sacrifice what might be—as her heart whispered, what was—Mr. Vavasour's happiness, with her own, yielded to this new view of the subject. It was consoling to believe she was serving him while thus destroying herself.

She was silent a little while; then she raised her head, looked up at Mrs. Darby, and said—

"I had before determined upon what I thought was my duty to Miss Darby—to my friend—now I see it is my duty to Mr. Carteret. It will be more easy. May I go away now?"

"Why, la, my dear," with her hand upon the bell, "you look quite sick and pale! you had such a color just now! Let me ring up Lewis to give you a little camphor julap, or sal volatile, or something. Pray don't faint away here; you can't think what a shock it gives me. Pray—pray"

"I am not going to faint, madam," said Angela, with a sickly smile. "I don't know why I looked paler than usual just at that moment; but, if you please, I think I had better go—for, indeed—I don't feel very well," she said, keeping down, with great effort, a loud hysterical shriek which was laboring to burst forth.

I said she was relieved by the intelligence she had received, but yet such was its immediate effect.

She had once or twice before longed to cry aloud, once to give vent to her feelings, to let the anguish pent up within explode—to relieve herself of the heavy weight upon her heart.

"Yes, you had better go; indeed—that is, if you can walk without tumbling down in those shocking convulsions—else let me get out of the way and send Lewis to you," cried Mrs. Darby, getting up from her chair. "I couldn't bear to see it again—I really couldn't."

"Don't be alarmed, madam; it's over now. Pray don't send for Mrs. Lewis: I can walk to my own room perfectly well."

"I certainly like that young woman very much," was Mrs. Darby's reflection as she left the room; "and she really seems to have quite what they call a great mind."

CHAPTER XLIX.

We that did nothing study but the way
To love each other—with which thoughts the day
Rose with delight to us, and with them set—
Must learn the hateful art, how to forget.

HENRY KING.

Vavasour to Angela.

“I deny your right to decide, or to dispose of me. I pledged myself to you, and received your pledge, when I believed myself at liberty, and when I was—for I was not, and did not think myself, bound by the engagements of others. Your inexplicable silence was not sufficient to make me faithless to my promise. I considered you my wife, and I believed we should meet again. What a false impression of your inconstancy urged me in my desperation to do, must be vain, as was the impression upon which I acted. I do not love Augusta Darby—I can not love her. I never loved but one, and that is you. If I seemed to love her it was on account of you, because she was constant when I thought you false. I could have tried to make her happy in revenge for your infidelity. I can love her in no other way.”

Angela to Vavasour.

“I have no right, I own it, to decide for you; but I have the right, and I exercise it, to decide for myself. If my unfaithfulness could lead you to love Augusta, believe me unfaithful still. I am unfaithful. I worship in my heart an image which is not yours—you know it well. I have believed it among the past and dead, and so I have loved and lived for it. It is among the past and dead, for its living likeness is no longer here. O Mr. Vavasour! one course only remains for us both now—the natural and righteous course; obey your mother, fulfill your engagements with Miss Darby, and you will make every body happy.”

Vavasour to Angela.

“Lay your hand upon your heart and answer me truly, as you would at the solemn day of account—answer me, Angela! shall I make *you* happy?”

Angela to Vavasour.

"I was not born to be happy—some are not. Some in this world are born to play the hard parts in life's business. Many are worse off than I am. I shall do very well when Augusta and you are happy."

Vavasour to Angela.

"You will do very well! I hope I understand that. No; you will never do very well if it depends upon my marriage with Augusta Darby."

Angela to Vavasour.

"Then never think to see me more."

She could not stand it.

She could not stand the sight of Augusta's struggles.

It seemed as if Augusta could *not* give up Vavasour.

It was true she had thought herself generous—she had intended to be generous; but once the sacrifice upon Angela's part made, and accepted upon hers—once again having admitted the hope that she should not be finally parted from him, it seemed as if all power of further effort or resistance was at an end; and she clung tenaciously to the idea of being his.

The above correspondence between Vavasour and Angela was, of course, a perfect secret to her; the resistance of Vavasour to Angela's efforts not in the least suspected.

He had been very ill at first, and as soon as he could be moved had gone, as it was said, to London for advice. This accounted for his non-appearance at Donnington; his total silence, as far as writing was concerned, was more incomprehensible. But Angela was never weary of assuring her that he would write sooner or later; that of course, at present, he felt himself in peculiarly awkward circumstances; that to a man of his extreme susceptibility nothing could be so distressing as the situation into which he had brought himself; that she would have satisfaction by and by; and all the while this satisfaction was what the generous creature was laboring to procure for her.

Augusta, yielding to her passion, and thus suffering herself to accept the sacrifice of these two hearts, may appear to you—and I dare say she does—as a very inconsistent person with the lively, high-spirited, generous heiress of Donnington; but it is, I believe, but too true a picture of human nature unguided by higher influences.

Her many excellent qualities undisciplined by education, neither directed nor strengthened by principle, her character entirely self-sustained, and neither seeking nor even knowing of that hidden power within, which can animate and support the weakest, making a hero even of the woman or the child; when temptation came, she fell away.

Her first impulse had been all generous, self-sacrifice; but she had not the grace of perseverance—that grace, the gift of a strength which is not our own. She accepted, as I have said, the sacrifice made by her friend; and having accepted it, having once taken the wrong and selfish course, it is astonishing what self-delusion, what sophistry, she made use of to disguise the truth from herself, and encourage herself in the ungenerous part.

She allowed herself to look upon Angela's pale and fading cheek, and to tell herself this was as it had always been; to feel that thin, light hand laid in hers, and never to ask herself where all its strength was gone; to dwell upon her own pretensions, her own constancy, her own long, undefined engagement, and to forget the indefeasible claim of two hearts that were devoted to each other.

She indulged all the anxiety, she attempted no control over the contending hopes and fears, the harassing uncertainties, of her situation. She clung desperately to the recollection of that one brief scene in her mother's dressing-room, and persisted in believing that Vavasour loved her, though he did not know it.

Mr. Vavasour continued obdurate, and Angela resolved.

She would not, in spite of his most earnest entreaties, allow him to see her—not even once; while the very motive which rendered her the more determined in her resolution, was the very one which rendered his resistance more obstinate.

Miss Darby's fortune.

Miss Darby's unfortunate fortune seemed in his eyes to obscure all her other claims. That heart which had loved him so long and so truly—that warm heart, which had laid him under an everlasting obligation by its kindness to Angela; the engagements he had entered into; the anguish he was inflicting—all which things his mother painted to him in the most lively colors; all was forgotten in the consideration of her fortune, and the detestation with which he regarded the idea of marrying for money.

It was the horror and repulsion with which he contemplated this idea which had, perhaps, in part caused his first estrangement from her; and the contrast afforded by the relation in which he stood to

Angela, which had made the romance of the Great Ash Farm so exquisitely delightful.

And yet I do him injustice, which is not necessary; for you, none of you, like him too well. I am sure: these sort of characters please nobody but myself, I think. I do him injustice: it was Angela's character which had made such a deep impression upon his heart; it was the contrast of her generous activity and energy with his own listless indolence and self-indulgence, which had awakened the ineffaceable passion he felt for her.

Joan Grant, as usual upon such occasions, was the common refuge of all parties.

These strong and upright characters, when the circumstances of their own fate have driven them out of the area of the passions, and forced them, as it were, to stand aside—spectators rather than actors in the tragedy of life—find themselves invested with a high and noble mission.

To those who have early fought and vanquished in the great battle with disappointment and sorrow, and who, when victorious—like maimed veterans retiring, broken though unsubdued, from the great triumph—bear in their calm but changeless melancholy the thunder-scars of the great contest that has been waged; to those who have ceased to live in this world for themselves, but wait, like ministering angels, to be the consolation and support of others; to those, as to a sanctuary, the miserable and the weak, the penitent and the oppressed, the hesitating and the desperate, in their darkness, in their struggles, in their anguish, fly.

There was not one of all this little party that did not honor Joan Grant—whom all men honored; but, far more than that, there was not one who did not love and trust her—not one who did not fly to the shelter of her inexhaustible kindness, as the child seeks comfort on its mother's bosom—not one who did not rest implicitly in her wisdom, as in that of a being of a higher nature than their own.

Lady Missenden—Carteret—Angela—one and all, in the general distress, flew for support and direction to Joan Grant.

It would have been a hard part for many to play, but she never found any part too hard. In her genuine goodness of heart—in that tender Christian benevolence, which made the distress of every one its own—in the treasures of inexhaustible sympathy for suffering of every description which she had to bestow, Joan Grant could give consolation when there was nothing else to give, and when all attempt at a remedy was vain: but most often she had more than mere con-

solation to offer. She had her wise and temperate advice—she had her just and righteous decisions—she had all those resources which wisdom, equity, and courage point out, to carry us safely through the labyrinth of human affairs.

Every one in difficulty, hesitation, and doubt, on this occasion, had recourse to Joan Grant. Every one but Augusta.

Those who were single of purpose and sincere with their own hearts fled to Joan Grant, with confidence that they should find light and strength. Not so those at issue with themselves, like poor Augusta! Not those who purposely blinded the light within them—who endeavored to stifle the voice of truth; who could, but would not, yield up the idol of their soul; and pleaded the cause of their hearts with all the sophistry of passion.

Upon such Joan Grant's simple and uncompromising way of viewing things, her truthful and faithful adherence to the right and the just, acted like the spear of the bright angel—or rather like the wand of the domestic fairy; light and order succeeded to the vain labyrinth of conflicting reasonings and inclinations, leaving no place for those vain subterfuges under which they would fain conceal themselves.

Augusta had much indeed, she thought, to plead; and she believed that there were many pleas for her conduct to be urged, which even the righteous Joan Grant would not reject. It was not so much, therefore, that she thought Joan Grant would decide that she was altogether wrong, as the secret consciousness that, wrong or right, she was determined to persevere; that, wrong or right, yield up Vavasour to another she would not—which made her avoid upon this occasion all communication with one she really loved and respected as much as any one of them.

But with Vavasour—Angela—Lady Missenden herself, the case was otherwise.

They all, at least, believed themselves to be in the right, and they sought Joan Grant for confirmation in their views, and advice and support in maintaining them.

First came Lady Missenden herself.

Lady Missenden and Mrs. Darby were the very reverse of each other; the one all apathy, the other all agitation; the one all indolence, the other all energy; the one all listless indifference, the other all susceptibility and excitement. The one with no fancy and little feeling—a mind vacant and unoccupied; the other of imagination all compact—true mother of that too imaginative son; full of ingenious schemes, of vain fears, of fantastic hopes; never at rest, like

the troubled sea. They were resembling only in one thing—a very great deficiency in that supreme quality of the mind, that precious ingredient too often overlooked or misprised, which binds and harmonizes the whole—common sense.

Common sense, which—if genius be properly defined, as it is by Lavater, “intuition of truth”—may be called genius in its every-day working-dress.

CHAPTER L.

How vain are all our glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve!

Rape of the Lock.

THE first who sought Miss Grant upon this occasion was, as I said, Lady Missenden.

This was partly accidental; Lady Missenden being the only one of the party in London, to which place Miss Grant had been summoned from Widdrington, as it happened, just at that juncture, upon some business or another connected with her various undertakings.

Lady Missenden had resolved upon writing to her, and called in New Norfolk street to inquire where she was to be found; when the footman who opened the door informed her that Miss Grant had arrived in town the evening before, and was at that moment in the house.

“Disengaged?” asked Lady Missenden.

“At the present moment I believe she is, ma’am,” answered the man; “but her carriage is ordered out earlier than usual.”

“Oh, then, pray take up my card. Stay,” taking out her pencil, “I will write upon it.”

“Dearest creature, I came to ask your direction. I wanted to write to you. Admit me for three seconds, and alone.”

“Three seconds! Then they must be measured upon that clock of eternity which is said to have no hands,” said Mr. M'Dougal. “Three seconds, when my Lady Missenden begins to talk!”

“Show Lady Missenden into the drawing-room,” said Joan. “She seems in distress by her urgency,” turning to the minister, who was sitting, as usual, in his arm-chair by the fire. “Dear Mr. M'Dougal, will you be so very kind as just to prepare these papers for me, while

I step down into the drawing-room and see her? I will not let her be long. I am sure there is something amiss."

"Ay, ay, get down, good creature; I'm fain to busy myself with dispatching for thee some of thy endless tasks: but it's a heartless labor, too," smiling: "for as fast as one good deed is rid of, another comes in its place. It looks as if thy work partook of the infinite," thought the minister; "It is as the circle of eternity . . . Thou hast but begun here what is to endure through all time," he went on to himself, as he took up the papers and continued the business she had been employed upon.

But Joan had already left the room.

The moment she entered the drawing-room, Lady Missenden, holding out both hands, advanced to meet her with an air of the utmost affection, and taking both hers, said—

"I am the luckiest creature in the world to have found you in town, dear, dear Joan Grant!"

"I did not even know you were returned," was the reply. "How are you all? how is my lord?—better I hope. Your son, is he with you? is he returned to England, too? You are looking very well," she added, looking at Lady Missenden, who had been once a very beautiful woman, and who still possessed all that beauty which delicate whiteness of complexion, hair yet unfaded, large blue eyes, and a large, full, but not unwieldy figure, give to the latter end of middle age.

"Do I look well? I am sure it is wonderful if I do! But sit down, can't you, for a few moments, dear Joan; for what I have to say can not be said in a second. My son! my lord! Oh, my lord is as well as one can hope; you've heard, no doubt—ill-nature carries such reports quickly enough about—how bad it is with his affairs, poor man! But it's not that which vexes me—it's only going abroad again. But Vavasour, my son—oh, Joan Grant, thank your stars that you never married!"

"I am very sorry Mr. Vavasour should give you uneasiness," said Miss Grant, "for I know well how acutely you feel any thing connected with his conduct or welfare; but I hope it is no very great matter. Mr. Vavasour never can give his parents any very serious cause for uneasiness."

"Do you think so? Oh, how people may be mistaken!—You have thought me too fidgety about him in former days, I know; and you used sometimes to tell me in your quiet way, when I came with all my troubles and cares to you, that you thought if I would think less about him, and let him take his chance a little, like other people, he

would do better. I thought you wrong then : I thought you wanted that finer perception of things, which is generally a want, I think, with you very sensible people. But let that pass, I begin to wish I had attended more to what you said. One couldn't follow the common course with such a fine creature as that, and now he has run out of the common course with a vengeance !”

“ I am very sorry to hear that, indeed ; but I feel sure that, if he has run a little astray, it has not been viciously. Mr. Vavasour is incapable of what is vicious.”

“ No, I can't call it absolutely viciously. I believe there was no actual vice ; but I don't know whether not quite as bad, or worse. A man gets out of vice—he's ashamed of it, and one can persuade him to break the connection—but these *virtuous* follies,” said Lady Missenden, with a strong emphasis upon the word, “ are almost irreparable.”

Joan Grant looked grave.

“ Oh, I beg your pardon !”

Lady Missenden begged pardon as at the commission of a personal offense, when she had been betrayed into an immoral sentiment before Joan Grant.

“ Oh, I beg your pardon—I didn't mean quite that ; but I really am so provoked, so perplexed, so miserable, that I scarcely know what I say. Pray excuse me.”

“ I am sure you are really as glad as any mother can be, that your child should escape vice,” said Joan Grant ; and she believed what she said, for she was of that spirit which thinketh no evil—and Lady Missenden was not altogether unworthy of the good opinion : “ but what is the matter ?”

“ Why, only think ! You know the pains I took to keep him from all undesirable connections—indeed I didn't think any boys or young men scarcely good enough for him, and more especially those *low* connections which you know poor Lord Missenden But no matter ; you used to differ from me in the means I used, and say I kept him too much at home—tried to guide him too much myself, you used to say—wouldn't let him walk alone. Well, he's walked alone at last, and far enough in all conscience ; he's walked into—what do you think ?—a love affair with a young beggar !”

“ A beggar ! What do you mean by a beggar ? Not literally a person as far beneath him in manners and education as in fortune ? I hope not that,” said Joan.

“ Oh, as for manners and education, I am sure I know and care nothing in the world about them ; it's sufficient for me that she's a

beggar, and that she has ruined his prospects with my darling Augusta Darby into the bargain."

"Miss Darby!—Miss Darby! I hope not," said Joan.

"Yes, but it has. You know nothing of that affair; you were not likely—Laura and I kept it a profound secret among ourselves: but the children were betrothed from their cradles, and we passed our promise to bring them up for one another. You know Augusta Darby's fortune is a noble one, and Laura has performed her part of the engagement nobly; for Augusta perfectly adores Vavasour. But what have I done? Lo and behold, when my gentleman is brought up to the starting-chair at last, and goes down to ratify the engagement—which, mind, he had never broken—all at once pops this pretty beggar from under the bush, and he flatly refuses both Miss Darby and her fortune!"

Joan Grant smothered a sigh, but she could not prevent a slight glow of color, which just blushed, then faded upon her dark cheek.

"So perverse he is! All I can urge seems only to strengthen him in his unspeakably absurd resolution. Promise for promise, the engagement with Augusta, is of the longest standing, and has been renewed voluntarily by himself within this six days—quite voluntarily, without the slightest interference upon my part—for, to tell the truth, I was quite sick of his incomprehensible behavior to her, and had resolved when he came to England to let matters take their own course. And what does he do but write and renew his engagement, and go down to Donnington—and there's such love going on between them!—when up starts this beggar from a bush by the way-side; and, lo and behold, we are off, and full of all sorts of absurd nonsense—sacred engagements, promises, pledges, love, honor, and what not—as if there were not claims enough on the part of my sweet Augusta Darby!"

"This seems, indeed, a strange, perplexing affair," said Joan. "Nobody but yourself, Lady Missenden, should have persuaded me that Mr. Vavasour would prove such a stranger to fidelity and rectitude as your words seem to imply."

"And that sweet, dear, Augusta Darby," Lady Missenden went on, "who loves him with her whole heart and soul, and would have made such a wife for him, with all her bravery and spirit! She has more sense in her little finger, has that fine girl, than Vavasour in his whole body! And then, Laura to have encouraged her and brought her up to this attachment, and all gone on just as we wished; and then to have that fine girl's happiness ruined, and her heart broken; for it will break! Vavasour,"—(with a true mother's blind partiality

and foolish pride); "Vavasour is not a man to be loved with impunity. With all his faults, she may search the world round, and never find such another! and that's what she knows and feels; and I dote upon her for it!"

Miss Grant said nothing, but looked anxious and much interested.

"It's quite been a romance—a romance in real life; to watch that girl's heart as I have done, striving to hide its partiality under an air sometimes almost of rudeness (if she were not too well bred to be rude), and he playing with it, and never saying one thing or another, so abstracted, so full of his poetry and his sketching. I little dreamed, and she little dreamed, of any other rival. We used to laugh together at his misanthropical, absent, *distract* ways; and I used to tell her, that if men delighted him not, neither did women either. And he was in love with this odious hussy in a corner all the while!"

"You surprise me more and more; from what little I know of Mr. Vavasour you astonish me. I thought his taste only too refined—only too delicate, perhaps, for the useful purposes of this world. I never thought he would have formed one of these low attachments!" said Joan. "But is she really so odious and unworthy of his affection as you represent her?"

"I tell you I neither know nor care what she is—that she's a poor, portionless girl, is enough for me; but, in justice to her, I believe I ought to add, that she seems to have behaved rather well: for this very morning, when I had worked myself into a towering passion, and was lanching fire and fury at her, he sprang up in a rage, and said, 'She was a fine, high-spirited, disinterested creature, and had set him at perfect liberty, if he chose to avail himself of it.' 'Which she knows very well you never will,' cried I. 'Which she will find I never will,' said he."

"She seems, indeed, by this, to have notions of delicacy and honor," said Miss Grant. "If she has set him at liberty, one great difficulty is over, and the decision rests with himself; but a greater difficulty still remains, to know what his decision in equity ought to be."

"Good gracious, Joan! what are you talking about? Why, can you make a question whether this pretended love affair—this romantic stuff—is to stand against his long serious engagement with Augusta Darby, ratified by himself, I tell you? Why, by his own showing he knew this girl only two months, and Augusta has loved him since she was a baby!"

"Where could he have met with her?"

"Oh, we are governed by evil stars, I think, at least some of us. Only think of my sending him down to Sherington all alone to look after some things, and study a little, as I thought—and there, not knowing very well what to do with himself, my young gentleman takes to long walks, and in some nook or other of those interminable hills which lie at the back of the park, he stumbles upon an old picturesque farmhouse, and sees a sick woman lying in a garden, and a girl nursing her—and the fool falls in love, because it was a fine day, and they were under a green walnut-tree! 'Tis enough to make one die with contemptuous laughter, if it were not so serious a matter. Only think of the fool! a picturesque farm-house, sunshine, and a walnut-tree—I believe, though, there were two. Of all the ten million absurd reasons for falling in love, this is the climax for absurdity! Did you ever know any thing like it? a picturesque farmhouse, two walnut-trees, a bright sun, and a woman in a consumption!"

"A farmhouse! a woman in a consumption!" said Joan, bending forward and looking anxious. "Who is this young creature? Not the young lady who is at present living with Miss Darby, I *do* hope?" said she.

"Why, you don't know any thing about *her*, surely! Nay, Miss Grant," looking alarmed and half angry, "I hope you are not going to take her part on that account?"

"No," said Joan; "depend upon it, I am not going to take her part on that account."

"But I am very sorry you know her though," said Lady Missenden, tartly; "for if you take to backing my young gentleman in his romance and rebellion, I may as well give up the battle at once," added she, her color rising. "Was ever any thing in the world so unfortunate? I am the most unlucky person upon the face of the earth!"

"Not in this," said Joan Grant, gently; "not in this. The decision does not rest with me; you forget you are the only person who has applied to me upon the subject. I have no influence to exercise over Mr. Vavasour; depend upon it, he will never ask advice of me."

"But *she* will; and if she does, I know what you will advise her to."

"To do what is right, I hope you believe," said Joan; "and to adhere to her rejection, if that is right."

"You are an adorable creature!" said Lady Missenden, casting her arms around her; "there can not be a doubt about the subject."

But Joan gently disengaged herself.

"I must hear both sides before I can feel sure of that," said she.

"Hear both sides! That's so like one of your provoking cold speeches, Joan. Hear both sides, when I have told you all about it! And, moreover, she has owned herself in the wrong by giving up her claims."

"I am not so sure that is owning herself in the wrong. But indeed I am very, very sorry for all of them—believe me, I am. I know how easily, without any one person being very much in the wrong, a great deal of wrong may be done, and a great deal of misery ensue. I am grieved for them all. Your son. . . ."

"Oh, he's miserable enough, to be sure, if that could give me any comfort; and though he scorns to say a word about Augusta Darby, when I tell him how she loves him, and pretends not to believe it, I have seen his looks—I understand them pretty well—he can't help feeling for her now and then. If it were not for his pride about the money, I believe it would all be right still."

Again Joan started—again repressed a sigh; again the burning flush was upon her cheek.

"Miss Darby has played such a kind, generous part by Angela," said she, as if to herself.

"So I understand. So Angela—what an absurd name! who ever heard of such a name? so this girl, I find, confesses. When Vavasour alludes to that, then he does look uncomfortable. He looks as if he did not know what to do with himself.

"This morning, when I exclaimed upon her generous kindness to this poor creature and the children—for do you know there are three children of her stepmother's that she maintains out of her salary—or did; for Augusta has done great things for them—when I exclaimed about Augusta's generous heart and great kindness to these poor creatures, he started from his chair, said he was the most miserable being that existed, and the best thing he could do would be to shoot himself. 'And break both their hearts instead of one,' said I. Which reflection seemed rather to cool him, and he sank down on his chair, and fell into a gloomy fit again, with his hands over his face. . . . If I were not so very, very angry with him, I must pity him."

And something very like a tear sprang into Lady Missenden's large, blue, but usually dry eyes.

"Now do tell me what you would advise me to do."

"You will only smile at me if I say tritely, What is right—but that is all I can say, and I acknowledge it does seem very difficult to know what is right."

"Well, I am glad you acknowledge so much. I have a great mind to send Vavasour to you, after all, to hear his story, and settle for us what is right; for one may as well endeavor to move Atlas from its roots as attempt to persuade that young man to any thing that his convictions do not tell him was right. If one could but get you once to say that to marry Augusta Darby was what he ought to do, one should have some hopes of him."

"You must not depend upon that; you had better not send him to me."

"And yet, Joan, if I could persuade you! His duty to his parents—his long engagement—the money, which he will want so horridly; for you know he can't do one mortal thing for himself. And besides, Angela, as you call her, has released him, and Augusta has not—so in common equity he is bound to the one and free from the other," argued Lady Missenden.

"I know Augusta Darby very well," said Joan, "and I am extremely sorry for her; I have seen very much of Miss Nevil, too, since we first became acquainted. She is one of the finest young creatures possible."

"So very handsome?" said Lady Missenden, with alarm.

"So very noble-hearted," was the reply. "It is very natural you should feel for the one you know—I feel for both."

"Well, I am glad you can feel for my darling Augusta, at all events; for I fancied she'd go to the wall with you, because she's not lackadaisical and methodistical, and so on, in the fashion all you good people like."

The footman entered.

"Miss Grant's carriage, Mr. M'Dougal desired me to say."

"Well, I must let you off," went on Lady Missenden; "for if I were to sit talking ten hours, it would come all to the same thing. So you have no advice to give me?"

"If I were to advise your ladyship, sincerely, it would be to forbear interfering in this matter for the present, and let the hurry of all these entangled feelings subside. Time often unravels these things better than we can ourselves. Where all mean well, there are usually some means of reconciling conflicting claims and feelings. I am sorry I must go; but I have business that can not wait." She was leaving the room; then her heart smote her, as if she had been unkind. She came back again, and taking Lady Missenden's hand with great kindness, said, "Believe me, I am, indeed, very sorry for this; if I can be of any use—of the slightest comfort, to any of you, I should be so glad. Dear Lady Missenden, it is a very harassing

affair—I feel it is—but rest in what is *right*, pray do—you will find it is peace as well as right.”

And then she went away.

Indulgent, though rigidly just; compassionate, though faithfully true; with sympathy for the infirmities and mistakes in which she could not share; full of that “wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

Lady Missenden remained behind a few moments to compose herself—disappointed, but still the better for the interview. It was impossible—every one found it impossible—to hold communication with Joan Grant’s mind without being the better for it.

Because, rigid and unbending as she was in every thing that appertained to truth and principle, never was bosom so overflowing with that spirit of human kindness—that warm sympathy—that gentle pity, which made its way to every heart. Her precious balms broke no one’s head, but, like the incense flowing to the hem of Aaron’s garment, soothed and softened every temper on which they fell.

Lady Missenden went away, composed and comforted in some degree, because she felt determined to do right.

But, then—ah, poor human nature!—she felt certain that the right lay where she wished it to lie, with Augusta Darby.

CHAPTER LI.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE next person who came to consult with Joan Grant was Mr. Vavasour himself.

He came in, looking pale and haggard, and his whole dress and appearance bespeaking that utter neglect of himself which attends upon self-condemnation and despair.

“I am come to you,” he said, “because I find my mother came to you. I do not see what right we have to trouble you with our

wretched dissensions ; but you seem to be the friend of every body in misery, and, perhaps, you will have patience with me."

" My dear Mr. Vavasour, you know I should be very glad if it were in my power to help any of you. I feel for you all in my heart—most for you, for you are the only one who has done wrongly."

" Yes, I have done wrongly—very wrongly, I believe," said he, with a despondency, but a certain reckless carelessness of manner. " My mother, at least, tells me so, and my own heart seems to say so ; for where I have made people so miserable, I must have been wrong. And yet, God is my witness I never meant it. I had no more idea that Augusta Darby cared for me, than I have that you do. I know I ought not indolently to have gone on without an explanation—I can not acquit myself there ; but as for Angela Nevil, my heart is as pure as an angel's. I worshiped her for her goodness, and adored her for that life of generous exertion she was leading. Think of her, with three little children about her—that young creature—that mere girl" . . . And the tears came to his eyes.

" Never regarding herself in the least—above all the petty vanities and little selfishness of her age. Such self-devotion at nineteen !

" She was only nineteen—a mere child herself. So suffering at times, so tired, so pale, so anxious. Was it wrong that I longed to lay her head upon my bosom, and take the weary one to rest within these arms ? Is it wrong that I can not, that I never will, forsake her ? Is it wrong that I will share her poverty, her privations, gladly, willingly ? Is it wrong that I can not bask in the sunshine of another's fortune, and leave her poor, obscure, and deserted ? Is this wrong ? Speak out, Joan Grant ; you once had a warm and generous heart ; speak out, and tell me whether, after all, this is so very wrong ?"

" No," said Joan, " such feelings can never be called wrong ; but there is a reverse to the picture. There is a warm-hearted, high-souled girl, who has been taught to love you from infancy, and to whom you have sinned, in that you kept this secret from her, and let her continue to love you, as one disengaged of heart and free."

" As Heaven is my help, I had no more idea that she loved me than she had that I loved another. She had such manners and ways, I swear to you, that till, on our return home, my mother at last opened my eyes, I believed she cared as little for me as I did for her."

" But why—it was not too late for an explanation even then—why did you commit the unpardonable injustice of renewing your

pledge to her, and simulating a passion it is plain you could not feel?"

"Oh, that *was* wrong—that was very wrong!" striking his forehead. "I own it—I own it. I was told my Angela, my own, my loved, my angel, was false, had ever been false—loved, and was married to another. Her treachery made the faith and constancy of Augusta appear transcendent. The passion of my revenge I mistook for another passion. Oh, I can not forgive myself in this. I was very, very wrong!"

"But when we have been very, very wrong," said Joan, gently, "we are not merely to listen to our lamentations, and think that regret, however bitter, for the pain we have inflicted, is reparation. Ought we not to endeavor, by God's grace, to compose our passions, to consider what is just, rather than what is pleasant; and to make reparation if it lie in our power?"

"Yes, to be sure, *if* it lie in our power; but it does not lie in my power. You might as well settle the dispute by the sword of Solomon, 'Split this heart in half, and present each with a portion.' What vain talk! I beg your pardon; indeed, Miss Grant, I do. But this appeal to justice and so forth, in what has to do with the heart, appears to me so futile. I love Angela, and she loves me. The heart has made its own selection. The rights of love are indefeasible, let all the philosophers in the world say what they will."

"Do you think so?" said Joan. "That is a dangerous maxim, indeed; the more dangerous, because it is so plausible. There is so much of truth in it," she said with a sigh; "it is such a terrible thing to disappoint the heart . . . and that makes me feel so much for Miss Darby."

"I wish you would not speak of her—I wish my mother would not be forever pleading her cause," said he, impatiently. "If I were such a coxcomb as to believe in this great misery to be inflicted upon Miss Darby, I should soon be as wretched as she is said to be. I own I have trifled with her affections in a most unjustifiable manner; and yet I never, never intended it. I was blinded by jealousy and disappointment. Well, I don't know what to do," said he, rising and pacing up and down the room impatiently; "nor, indeed, why I came here. What can the wisest friend do for a man in such a horrible predicament as mine, but tell me I am wrong whatever I do? Then let the wrong lead me to that helpless one who has no one on earth to take her part but me."

"Nay, you forget," said Joan; "she has found a generous friend, who has been mother and sister, all in one, to her."

“Ay, ay,” said he, with a gesture of despair, “that is it which rends my heart in pieces. If it had not been for her kindness to Angela. . . . Oh! I own it—I own it! When I think of that, I know not what to do.”

And in this unsatisfactory manner the scene between Carteret and Miss Grant passed away.

She would have had the courage to urge him to any sacrifice, had her own judgment made its decision; but she found the case too perplexing for her. She found it impossible to consent to the sacrifice of either one claim or the other. She felt so weak and irresolute herself, that she could not help partaking the weakness and irresolution of others, if weakness and irresolution it ought to be called; for weakness it perhaps was; but irresolution it was not. Vavasour held fast by his determination to adhere to his engagement with Angela. Miss Grant would have found it vain, if she had attempted, to dissuade him from it—a thing she found it quite impossible, after all, to persuade herself to do. They came to no decision whatever—how could they?—and they parted at last, dissatisfied with themselves and with each other.

What was to be done?

Vavasour wrote to Angela in a sort of triumph.

Vavasour to Angela.

“You seemed to wish me to go to Joan Grant. Well, I have been, but the oracle is dumb—dumb for once, my sweetest love! The voice divine can not decide against the most honest passion with which ever woman inspired man. I saw she could not find in her heart to do it. No, my sweetest Angela! it is all in vain. We love each other; and the force of love is resistless. Your cruel and most unjustifiable resolution (forgive the hard word), my sweetest, must and will give way. Even the inflexible Joan Grant was not proof against my reasoning. I feel that I must triumph at last, and I shall have patience; but do not imagine that I shall ever change. You may as well attempt to move the poles from their center, as turn this little loadstone within my heart in any other direction. I have cut off the entail, and all my father’s creditors will be satisfied; and I am going down to Missenden for a few days to arrange various things, and shall come home with a purse as light as will be my heart—when once you have consented to be mine, as consent you must and will. I shall go over to the farmhouse, you may be sure, and will bring my Angela a sprig from the walnut-tree. And then, sweet girl, let us begin that simple life

together, of which in those days you used to dream so fondly. I had a vision of seeing you adorn a better, at least a higher place; and yet, like you, my heart yearned after that sweet life of retirement and cheerful industry which we were leading there. Now, my dear, we may carry on our romance in good earnest, for I don't see that there will be a sixpence left when all the debts are paid, except my mother's settlement; and she will want all that for herself and my father. Can you resist it, my darling? Can you resist the picture? We are sitting painting together, and we sell our pictures, and provide the sweet bread of toil for ourselves and the children—*your* children, which are already mine."

With a heart beating, and cheeks blushing and tingling, she read these fond and persuasive letters. She had begged of him not to write, but he was determined and persevering. Every post brought his letters; and every day, with a fresh resolution not to open them, she had the misery of feeling that it was impossible to resist the temptation. She read, and the expressions of fondness melted with dangerous sweetness upon her heart. She felt that she only increased her own difficulties and temptations by thus listening to his passion; but the temptation was irresistible. So long as he would write, she found it impossible not to read; yet her resolution was inflexible, and this last letter brought her to a new determination. She, too, resolved to go and speak to Miss Grant.

The state of Augusta in the mean time had become truly melancholy. It would seem that, with all the attachment she had so openly professed for her cousin, it was not till now that she herself, or indeed any one, was aware of the depth and force of the sentiment.

The more she brooded upon her strange disappointment, the less she seemed able to endure it with fortitude; and yet she struggled hard. She strove for composure; she strove to vanquish the power of love by the force of pride; she strove to release herself from the fetters in which she was involved: but she could not. In this violent state of irritation she was maintained by hope.

No passion is ever vanquished where there is hope. Till that is utterly extinguished, it is impossible for the cure of the fatal disease to begin. Agitated by contending sentiments, there is no rest, and there can be no beginning of a cure—the heart clings desperately to hope while one fragment of hope remains, as the drowning sailor amid the beating waves clings to the floating mast.

This hope was founded upon Angela's determination—upon her

knowledge of the generous strength of that high-souled girl's purposes, and upon the certainty that she would adhere faithfully to the promise she had given.

The large fortune Augusta had to bestow upon the ruined and penniless man, certainly very much strengthened both in their resolutions. Angela in her determination to dissolve her engagement, Augusta in the determination to maintain hers. This was a very natural effect of the circumstances in which they stood. Angela's genuine desire to sacrifice herself for the happiness of Augusta, had determined her to dissolve her engagement; but this resolution was greatly strengthened by reflecting upon the advantage to the ruined and penniless Vavasour; while the same consideration seemed to blind Augusta to the selfish nature of her attachment. It was astonishing with what courage Angela preserved the appearance of outward serenity, though her poor heart too often felt dying, as it were, within her; while Augusta abandoned herself to all the irritation of doubt, and to the deep mortifications of a position, which, however, be the consequences what they might, she felt, or fancied it, impossible for her to abandon.

The black melancholy which had succeeded to her once gay and brilliant spirits, affected Angela deeply, for she loved Augusta tenderly. The house, the walks, the cottage at the lodge—there was not a spot which did not recall some mark of Augusta Darby's generosity, some proof of her affection and kindness. When she had in her turn been nervous, melancholy, anxious, and suffering, could she ever forget who it was that, gay and prosperous, and with all the world before her, had turned aside, like the good Samaritan, and in her generosity and pity received and sheltered her in her distress?

That little cottage to which she went every day to visit and instruct her children, and where she now spent a great part of her time, was filled with the testimonies to Augusta's kindness. Those walls so gayly papered and painted—how had they laughed and labored together while busily preparing them for the children! The little garden—now, it is true, strown with fading flowers and scattered heaps of red and yellow leaves; that garden, now lying in all the dreariness of the later autumn—how had its primroses, and violets, and auriculas bloomed in the spring! all planted by Augusta's own hand, when Angela had been too weak to assist her. How busy and how happy she was when poor Augusta and she sat on that seat by the wimpling brook! On that very seat it was that Augusta had talked of Vavasour, and called up every sym-

pathy of which her heart was capable by the description of her feelings.

Yes, there they had sat, or there they had walked arm and arm; there Angela had listened with interest, ever new, to the outpourings of those strong, those natural, those honest, but too wild and extravagant feelings, which she trusted communion with a man like Mr. Vavasour would correct.

Here Augusta Darby had laughed merrily; here she had talked so wittily and so well; here she had played with Angela's little brothers and sister; here she had sat and helped at the necessary needlework; here she had wiped away a tear upon Angela's cheek when sad; or had supported her troubled spirits with unabated kindness when low. All, all was full of it.

And should she, should she forget all this, and blight her friend's prospects—cloud over a life so bright and happy, and expose one so little accustomed to suffer to all the agonies of jealousy and disappointed love? She could not do it.

The attachment to Carteret yielded to this stronger sentiment inspired by Augusta. She could not be ungrateful; no, not even for him. She could not, she would not, be ungrateful.

Such was her heart.

And now they are walking up and down that long gloomy avenue, the only walk in those damp days of decaying autumn which they found tolerable, for all the other walks were upon the grass, and that was far too wet to allow of that indolent strolling up and down, which seems the natural solace of those oppressed by the weight of their own melancholy.

They are walking up and down together, but their gait is slow and heavy; how unlike the buoyant tread proper to their years!

Augusta has this morning been more darkly melancholy than ever; her large black eyes are filled with a foreboding gloom; her brow contracted; her countenance black as midnight. She no longer leans on Angela's arm with her usual cordiality. She walks silently by her side, absorbed in her own miserable thoughts.

Angela is grown much thinner, and looks very delicate; but her beautiful and pure face, her soft brown hair, the melancholy yet serenity and composure visible in her eyes, that ineffable brightness over her countenance, tell of one at rest with her own conscience, at ease with her own heart.

Morning and night, peace and strife, an angel of light and an angel of darkness, such are the hackneyed images that I find myself tempted to use with relation to them.

They were both thoughtful, and both had been long silent: the one absorbed in her own harassing reflections, the other watching her friend with anxiety, and sorrowfully reflecting upon the change which a few short days had made in her temper and spirits—upon the irritable impatience and sullen melancholy which were gaining rapidly upon her, and upon the absolute necessity of taking some decisive step, if she wished to save her, before it was yet too late. At last, after watching her in this way some time, she broke silence by saying—

“My dear Miss Darby, if you could, if you would, try to shake off this dreadful melancholy, I think you would be better.”

“I do not want to be better, and I do not deserve to be better,” Augusta replied, gloomily. “I never was one of your virtuous ones—who make a conscience of striving to be happy, ‘struggling with sorrow,’ as they call it, and all that pretense and stuff. When I was happy, I was happy—Heaven knows how happy. Now I am wretched, and I would rather not affect to be any thing else.”

“But, dear Augusta, if you will not resist these feelings a little they will continue to grow, as they have grown, upon you; they will end in injuring your body and destroying the health of your mind. If you would only do a little violence to yourself, struggle against this despondency and look forward with hope! Believe me, all will be right at last.”

“No, all will be wrong at last; I feel that and know it, as well as that I am walking up and down here—all must and will be wrong, where one is resolved to persevere in wrong, as I am,” said Augusta, lifting up her dark eyes and turning them with a sudden flash of somber light upon her friend; “as I *am*, and you *know* I am, Angela.”

“No,” said Angela, gently, “don’t call it wrong. You would not persevere in it if you thought it wrong, I am sure you would not—not for worlds,” said Angela, fervently. “Have we not settled it long ago, that it is best and rightest in this way? and can you not see, dear friend, that I shall do very well? Set your heart at ease, dear Augusta.”

“I know we have settled it as you say, and you keep up wonderfully, Angela: but then you have the satisfaction of feeling that you are doing what is generous and right; and I have the miserable assurance that I am ungenerous and wrong. And yet—oh the unimaginable, unbreakable strength of the fetters that bind me!—I *can* not burst them. I always told you from the first—didn’t I, Angela?”—she went on rather wildly, “that I should trample on you—strangle

you—murder you—rather than you should stand between me and him.”

“And it is the greatest misfortune of my life to be the innocent cause of so much suffering,” cried Angela, warmly; “and when I think I would have died to have made either you or him happy.”

“Don’t mention *him*! I can’t bear to hear you speak of *him*!” said Augusta, hastily: “don’t, don’t, Angela; it drives me mad; it does, indeed. I am got into such a state—you must forgive me—I think my temper is utterly ruined: I feel so dreadfully irritable, as if the least thing in the world would drive me almost out of my senses. Never to have written me one line since that terrible letter of farewell! I am his cousin: we have been upon such terms! Why will he not at least write me one line—one line?”

“Believe me, he will very soon write to you: have patience for but a few days more.”

“Patience! This is what you are always preaching to me! A few days, only a few days more, and he will write! But the letter never comes!”

“But he *will*, and then all will be well.”

“I dare say he writes to you, though,” said she, turning to Angela, with a glance of sudden suspicion; “though all connection between you is, as you tell me, to be broken forever—I dare say he writes to you.”

“Yes, he has written to me—I do not deny it; but he will very soon write to me no more. Believe it, Augusta; trust to me. I know all that passes. You will soon hear from him, and you will be satisfied. But now, if you can listen, I have a favor to ask of you. Could you spare me for three days? I want to go up to London.”

“He’s in London; what do you ask me for? Go, by all means. I hope that you know you are your own mistress, Miss Nevil,” coldly.

“He is not in London, Augusta; you should not torment yourself with these injurious suspicions. If I wished to wrong you, do you think I could not find an opportunity? He is gone down into —shire, and will be away two or three days. I wish to set out for London to-morrow morning, if you can spare me. I shall return the day but one following.”

Augusta was too proud now to confess, with frankness and candor, as once she would have done, how much she was ashamed of her suspicions. She answered coldly.

It is sad to see, in a strife of this nature, when inclination triumphs over conscience, how fast the better feelings give way, and one by one become gradually obliterated. Even Augusta’s lofty superiority

to ungenerous suspicion was now lost in her jealousy of one whom she had begun to envy and to dread—to envy, for the goodness she could not bring herself to imitate; and to dread more and more for that indescribable charm which day by day seemed to be only the more visible in Angela.

She now answered coldly—

“I beg your pardon; I am growing very suspicious, I believe. I must be getting horridly jealous. It’s an ugly fault, and makes one very unjust, I suppose. When do you mean to come back again? I fancy I must not ask you what you are going for?”

“No,” said Angela, “pray, don’t ask me; it is so difficult to refuse you any thing, you know.”

“Is it? No, I didn’t know that. I did not think my power had been so *very* great. How horridly cold it is to-day! I wonder whether the post is come in? Shall we go into the house again?”

“The house suffocates me,” said Augusta, as they shut the hall-door behind them. “It’s this horrid stove in the hall, I believe. I can’t think why mamma would put it up. This sensation, as if one couldn’t breath, is so disagreeable. Is the post come in?”

“Yes,” said Angela, giving her the bag.

She opened it with nervous impatience, glanced over the directions of the several letters, and then, with a look of blank disappointment, putting them into the bag again, said—

“I shall go into my own room.” ●

To her own room, like some vexed spirit, the unhappy girl wandered.

She entered it with some such feelings as we may imagine those of a wretched prisoner re-entering his dungeon, after having been allowed his daily pittance of air and exercise. The room was as a prison to her—the walls seemed to press upon and suffocate her—her bed was like a tomb—so associated—so *saturated*, if I may use the expression—was that room, that bed, with recollections of restlessness and pain.

There were no waters of life springing up in this wilderness for her; no gladdening streams flowing from a better land to refresh her dry and stony heart.

To walk up and down; to open the window, and, leaning her head upon her hand, watch the gloomy, leafless trees of the long avenue, as their bare arms waved slowly up and down in the wintry wind—her mind soothed, to a certain degree, by the dull cadence and the monotonous motion as they rushed to and fro

To shut the window, feeling chilled and miserable, and, drawing her shawl over her shoulders, to bury herself in her arm-chair, her feet toward the fender, and sit there watching in the red embers the fantastic forms which peopled those red caves of fire, fantastic hobgoblins, furies, demons, fiends, as her sickly fancy summoned them up; to fling herself upon her bed—not to sleep, but to lie tossing with restless impatience, hating the night, yet dreading the dawn; to rise, at length, wearied from her pillow, and again return to the window, and look out upon the foggy night, watching the white fleeces of the mist as the dimensions of every object were enlarged by the optical delusion, and a sort of mysterious grandeur and beauty pervaded every thing; to try every change, and in no change to find rest; to carry every where her unsatisfied and yet obstinate heart, and find no relief from any thing;—such had been the fate of this unhappy girl ever since she had, against the pleadings of her better feelings, accepted the pledge from Angela, and yielded herself up to the force of a passion which her better self whispered ought to have been resisted.

But power to resist seemed denied—it was not given to her proud and self-relying spirit; in the day of temptation it was found wanting.

She grew more wretched, impatient, and miserable every hour, as still the hoped-for letter did not come. But yet she persisted.

The arrival of the post-bag each day was a source of especial torment. Every morning she took the bag into her hand, with the hope, almost the certainty, that she should hear something, to return it with an irritation of disappointment that it was almost impossible to bear.

Angela had seen her, this day, turn away with a gesture of more than usual impatience, and had watched her slowly ascending the stairs. She longed to follow her—to embrace her affectionately, and console her with the assurance that this torture would soon come to an end; but she dared not: she was beginning to be afraid of Augusta.

People of much sensibility find it very difficult to avoid being afraid of those who are enduring great suffering.

So she went sadly up to her own room, that dear girl, whose own burden was almost more than she could bear; and she, too, went and opened her window and looked out upon the chill and gloomy afternoon; but as she gazed upon that sky over which these inky clouds were slowly rolling, she remembered One who hath the clouds for his pavilion, and whose steps are on the wings of the wind.

“Even a dog,” says Bacon : “mark what a generosity and courage he will put on when he finds himself maintained by a man, who to him is instead of a God, or *melior natura* ; which courage is manifestly such as that creature, without that confidence of a better nature than his own, could never attain.”

And so it was here.

There is that in true faith, in the actual living belief in an actually existing being, of absolute beauty, absolute righteousness, and absolute, infinite benevolence, which banishes the loneliness from the deserted and solitary heart, and consoles for all the deformities, inconsistencies, errors, weaknesses, and crimes of this imperfect sketch, this rude embryo state of the soul's life, in which we at present exist.

Augusta, it was plain, was beginning to love her less. Neither confidence nor affection would reward the sacrifice she had made.

The very greatness of the sacrifice, the very strength of the feelings which she had conquered in her behalf, would form but an additional reason for the estrangement.

That was hard.

The poor heart swelled at the thought—swelled almost as if it would burst ; for what is bitterer than affection thus disappointed ? what crueler than the sting of ungrateful coldness from those for whom so much has been offered up ?

There is but one refuge in the desolation of such feelings, and she had found it.

If there were weakness, error, infirmity, disappointment, in all around her here—there, there was absolute perfection, and never-failing love, and sympathy.

There was the divine pity of the great, the glorious, and the all-good, whose ear was open to the poor heart's cry. Magnificent and beautiful truth.

Yes, she, too, opened her window, but not, like her poor friend, in vain. The fresh air cooled her hot cheek, and relieved her oppressed lungs ; her prayers arose for courage and patience, and new courage and new patience diffused themselves, like balm, over her spirits. By and by she arose and closed the window, and went to her little wardrobe, and began quietly to look out her things and pack her small portmanteau, in preparation for that journey to London, which was to complete and ratify her sacrifice.

CHAPTER LII.

For I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.

SHAKSPEARE.

AUGUSTA had not risen when it was time for Angela to set out to meet the coach, but she would not go away without taking leave of her.

She knocked at her door, and was admitted.

Augusta was lying upon her bed, in her dressing-gown, and seemed to have thrown herself down, half undressed, in utter weariness of spirit and despair of finding any thing like rest.

Her head was uncovered ; and the large heavy folds of her splendid dark hair were rolling in black dishevelled masses round her, and covering her shoulders and bosom.

Her large eyes looked larger than ever, but they were dry and distended, and seemed fixed in a gloomy, unvarying expression of discontent, as she lay there with her head thrown back, gazing upon the ceiling of her bed.

It was plain she had not been asleep that night.

She raised her head, without raising herself, when she saw Angela enter in her traveling dress ; and looking at her from head to foot, said—

“ You persist in going, then ? ”

“ Yes, my dear Augusta, why should I not go ? Believe me, I am going upon business that can not be delayed. I *must* go—it is better for us both that I should. I shall be back again in three days.”

“ You do not choose, I see, to tell me what your business is ; I must be content to expire of curiosity, I perceive,” said Augusta, in an irritable, sarcastic manner. “ Our intercourse is taking quite a new turn, I find ; we used to have no secrets for each other.”

This was unkindly meant, and Angela felt it, as it was intended she should ; but she had already learned to forgive—to bear with these little outbreaks of temper. She had resolved to endure every

thing from Augusta; what would her love and gratitude be worth if it could fail under slight trials like these?

"Love your enemies"—love your unamiable friends: that is, perhaps, still more difficult.

"I am very sorry I can not tell you, but I can not; and, more than that, you will never, never know. The best friends have their secrets, now and then," said she, trying to speak cheerfully. "But farewell, I must not be behind my time."

"You *know* he is not there?" said Augusta, with emphasis.

"Yes, I do," said Angela, coming back at this, for she had almost reached the door. "I will not say I have a right to be hurt at the implied suspicion, for I would not for the world part unfriendly. Dear Augusta, you know I do not deserve to lose your confidence in my integrity—good by," and she stooped to kiss her forehead.

Augusta pressed her hand, looked wistfully up at her for a moment or two, and then saying "Good by—God bless you!" let her hand go, and turned her face away.

"God bless you!" sacred, affecting prayer! too often so lightly and so vainly uttered, when the heart is cold or even alienated.

This time the prayer—if prayer from such a one it could be called—was at least sincere.

A sudden return of right feeling had for an instant warmed Augusta's heart, as she held Angela's hand, and gazed upon that sweet, sincere face; she was almost ready to say—it was upon her lips to say—

"Angela, you have conquered: I give him up."

But she did not say it. She turned away her face to the wall, and did not say it.

A journey in a coach to London, in a vehicle such as the sometimes regretted stage-coaches then were, closely packed up in a little, inconvenient, straight-backed carriage, where the cramped limbs could not be in the least extended, or the wearied frame indulge in any change of posture, was to some people a terrible thing.

What has been endured by those suffering from illness, or even by the delicate and weakly, whose means could afford them no better conveyance, ought to be known, and when known recollected, by those who still love to abuse railroads.

The praise of railroads comes with much grace from him whose business it is to write stories: for certainly no one has less reason to rejoice in them than he.

Certainly, nothing that man has, among his innumerable inventions,

ever invented, has done more to ruin all incidents founded upon the adventures or disasters of travel than this.

Angela was still very weak, and her nerves still very irritable.

She was, indeed, naturally of a delicate, sensitive temperament, and particularly susceptible to painful impressions from any thing belonging to the rude, the rough, or the gross. Exquisite was the delicacy of perception—exquisite the whole framework of her mind.

Traveling alone in a public carriage, young and unaccustomed to such things as she was, and exposed to all the chances and disagreeable circumstances of an arrival in a remote part of London, and with no one to meet or protect her, Angela, strong in the bravery of her own good heart, intent upon a high and generous purpose, was as if clothed in steel.

“What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted?”

cries the poet.

What stronger support than a sincere and honest purpose? than a mind intent upon the fulfillment of painful duty, and filled with disinterested intentions?

The coach was occupied by three huge, heavy, east-country graziers, or farmers, coming up on business to Smithfield; and in one corner, her bonnet and veil drawn over her face, and her allowance of room reduced to the smallest possible quantity, she sat leaning and thinking upon what she was about to do.

While their speech was of bullocks, she was occupied in agitating moral questions; and, equitable and wise above her years, she employed her time during the leisure for thought, which the separation from the exciting and harassing society of Augusta afforded, in once more reviewing her position. Sitting in this quiet corner of the stage-coach, her spirits lulled by the monotonous motion, she again examined the foundation of her resolutions—but she found no reason to alter her former view of the case.

She felt more than ever convinced that the welfare of Augusta—her moral welfare—was at stake, and depended upon the solution of this question—that to give up Vavasour would prove an effort beyond her strength, embittered as it would be by the reflection that the very person upon whom she had lavished so much kindness was her rival—that very kindness, as the motive for detaining her at Donnington, being the probable cause of her misfortune.

To make such a return was wrong, but, wrong or right, she could not do it.

Then, as regarded Vavasour, his father's unfortunate embarrassments seemed to decide the matter there too.

How could she bear to be the means of dragging into poverty and degradation one born to independence and fortune, and to accept his hand in defiance of his obedience to his parents and the wishes of every true friend he possessed?

From this contemplation she passed to prayer, imploring strength to accomplish her great sacrifice in a proper spirit; for power to retain her usefulness to others after the destruction of her own worldly prospects; and for energy to continue the friend and mother of these little children who entirely depended upon her care.

When her thoughts took this direction, she in part tasted the recompense of her generous devotion; the interest she took in the welfare of these little creatures was a source of much consolation.

There was a something yet left to live, and love, and toil for; and she thanked God for it.

And thus confirmed and strengthened in spirit, she descended from the coach at the place where it stopped, and choosing from a neighboring stand as decent a looking man and horses as she could, entered the straw-littered hackney-coach and was jostled along the pavements, and in due time landed in New Norfolk-street.

She heard with much satisfaction that Miss Grant was at home, and passing the footman, who was preparing in a leisurely manner to mount the stairs and announce her in due form, she opened the door of the boudoir, and presented herself to the astonished eyes of Joan.

"My dearest Angela!" exclaimed Joan, starting from her seat and coming forward with a look of surprise and pleasure: "you here?" opening her arms and embracing her affectionately; "you here, my dear? I ought not, perhaps, to be glad!" for she became anxious, as she looked at Angela's pale face; "but who can help being glad to see you? And yet, my love, why are you come? I hope nothing is amiss!"

"Oh, nothing, nothing!" said Angela, answering her with as cheerful a countenance as she could command; "I am only come here to take refuge with you for two nights, and to ask your advice and assistance in my difficulties: after that I am going to Donnington again."

"I am glad to hear that—I am glad Miss Darby and you . . . but take off your hat, for you look very pale and tired, my dear, and let me give you some refreshment; and then sit down in the old place

by the fire, and when you are rested say your say, and be sure you will find in me a patient and a loving listener."

A loving listener she might well call herself! There was that in Angela which had gained a higher place in Joan Grant's affection than had perhaps been held by any one since she had been deprived of her heart's first treasures, and her minister and she were left desolate upon the earth.

There was a sympathy that endeared them greatly to each other, though in many respects so different. In truth and singleness of purpose, in sincere devotion to the just and the right, they were the same.

The warmth of this reception cheered Angela, and taking off her bonnet and heavy cloak, she sat down by the fire, looking very lovely, with her fair hair somewhat in disorder, and her face rather pale, and with a something sad yet tranquil in her expression. And so Joan Grant, with something of a mother's partiality, observed, and could not wonder at the pertinacity with which Carteret defended himself in his engagement with so sweet a young creature.

She sat down opposite to her, stirred the fire, busied herself with the various little hospitable cares, chatting cheerfully and affectionately all the time, while Angela took, or rather tried to take, a little refreshment; then the servants being dismissed, and the fire again stirred, Miss Grant drew her own chair beside that of her young guest, took her hand very kindly and began—

"And now, my sweet child, I see your heart is full—too full, I see, to find rest or refreshment till you have unburdened it. So tell me, my dear girl, what your business is with me, and in what I can advise or help you."

Angela answered by a gentle pressure of the hand, and a look of affectionate confidence and gratitude.

"You are so very kind, I knew I might venture to appeal to you; I felt sure you would not think I was encroaching upon your goodness. I have been in very great perplexity: you know, no doubt—you have heard?"

"Yes, my love, I have heard much, but not all. I have heard one or two sides of the question; but, my dear, there are many, and I have not heard what is to be pleaded upon yours."

"Pleaded! nothing, madam. Were you not told by those whom you allude to—if, indeed, they are, as I suppose, those most deeply interested in this—I mean Lady Missenden and her son; did they not tell you that I had expressed my resolution upon the subject?"

"Lady Missenden and her son have, in fact, both been here; and Lady Missenden told me you had nobly renounced your claims."

Angela's countenance expressed pleasure.

"But Mr. Vavasour has not, I understand, accepted that renunciation," Joan went on, "and declares his intention to persist in his engagement with you. This alters the aspect of the case, my love; and it is upon this, I suppose, you wish to talk with me?"

"Partly, not exactly. I believe I have made up my own mind so completely as to what I ought to do, that even if you were to think me mistaken, dear Miss Grant, I should still persevere in my intention. What I wanted your counsel and assistance for was to enable me to accomplish what I know and feel sure ought to be done."

Joan looked at her, but did not answer; she waited to hear what the resolution thus decidedly announced might be—what this young creature's own heart had led her to resolve upon, unassisted by the guidance of others.

"I am very, very sorry—at least I ought to be very, very sorry—that Mr. Vavasour finds it so difficult to forget those few, those short"

Her voice trembled, and she stopped a little.

"How happy, happy But it must not be; he *must* forget them—we must both forget them, if we can."

She stopped again, her poor little hand trembling in that of Joan, who kept her eyes all the time fixed upon the young speaker, with an expression of tender sympathy that was beautiful.

"You can not have an idea—it would be impossible to give you an idea, to do justice to Augusta's kindness to me. I love her as my sister—more, as my friend. Do you think it possible," looking suddenly up into Joan's face with her bright and earnest eyes, "do you think it possible that any one could bear to break a friend's heart? this would break hers."

"And yours?" was all Joan said.

"Mine? it will *not* break mine."

She was silent again, and her hand once more shook slightly, and her lips trembled a very, very little.

Then she said,—

"I am used to sorrow—Augusta is not."

"My love!" said Joan.

"You can have no idea—even you, with all your great penetration and knowledge of human nature—of the force of Augusta's attachment to Mr. Vavasour. To think of my having witnessed it, and shared in her feelings, and felt such deep, deep interest in

them, and encouraged her to hope, and supported her in all her anxieties and struggles, by assuring her all must end well, and received in return, as the reward of my poor offerings of affection, such love, such kindness from her; and then to be the very one to plunge the dagger into her heart which will kill her! I can't do it—indeed, indeed, I can't."

"Are you making excuses to *me* for this transcendent generosity, dear girl? You need make no excuses to me."

"I was afraid you might think me wrong, too high-wrought, too enthusiastic and romantic—things I know you dislike very much; but indeed—indeed"

"I think you have the goodness of an angel—that I do think; and more, I think you in the right," said Joan.

"Do you? Oh, Miss Grant, what a relief is this!"

"It would, indeed, have been too hard upon you, my sweet girl, if, having made this noble renunciation, you did not meet with that support which the approbation of those you love must afford," said Joan; "and yet even that you could have done without: I see you could, brave girl! the testimony within would have supported you. Still I am glad, my love, that I am able to give you this little comfort at least," said Joan, affectionately.

Angela lifted up the hand she held and kissed it.

Then she again paused for a short space. She was gathering up her courage for the last great effort. She had, with many a bitter struggle, mastered her will, and had attained the *will to do*; now came the last final trial—to *do* what she had actually willed to *do*.

The time was come to take the step, and to sever at one stroke the ties so exquisitely dear.

She strove with herself, she gathered up her resolution, she waited till she could trust her voice, and then she said,

"What I am come to you for is to beg of you to do that for me which I am unable to do for myself. Convince Mr. Vavasour that my determination is irrevocable, that we are parted forever, and that the only kindness, the only proof of his regard, which he can now possibly show me, is to render this dreadful—I mean this—this thing—not useless—and to make my friend happy."

The tears started to her eyes, but fell not.

"I know, I know his generous affection, and his noble disinterested heart; but you must teach him—you must tell him that—that in this horrible shipwreck one must perish, but one may be saved, and—one only can; and that if he love me—if he care for me—he

will give me this only, only satisfaction. You must persuade him—you must say all what I mean and I can not say. Don't you think you can? I am sure you can."

"I think I can," said Joan.

She was a friend to weakness neither in herself nor others, as we know; she was courageous in the infliction of pain, when to inflict pain was necessary. She felt that sacrifices of this nature are not to be trifled with; that they must be maintained with the undivided force of the will, that there must be no looking back, no tampering with hope, no faltering of purpose. She believed that it would be cruelty and not kindness to flatter any weakness which yet might linger in the bosom of this young girl, by permitting her to entertain the slightest expectation that her interference, if attempted, might prove vain.

If she interfered, she believed it would not be in vain.

"Therefore . . ." she spoke in her usual plain manner, which some called hard and others severe; but which was only the severity and hardness of the determined surgeon, who cuts with resolute hand and unshrinking heart where he must cut at all—

"Therefore, my dear Angela, reflect again. Be sure there is no lingering afterthought, nothing which will make you repent the part you have taken in applying to me. I tell you, I believe, if I interfere I shall succeed; because, *if* I interfere I shall use every means in my power to succeed. But I do not say you are bound to make this noble sacrifice. No one can strictly be *bound* to more than justice, and here we are beyond justice; we have to do with generosity."

"You are very kind to say this. You are very wise. I know it gives you great pain to probe my feelings. It is very kind. Yes, I have thought it over as I ought, but I can not be the cause of Augusta's misery. I would rather bear it myself. I am able to bear it—she is not; and she has been so very, very good to me."

"And Mr. Vavasour, consider him."

"*That* I do! You know there is a great, great deal to be said about Mr. Vavasour. I hope, in such an affair as this, it is not wrong to mix up some ideas which may seem base in comparison with others, but when Mr. Vavasour shows such a generous disregard to worldly advantages for my sake, it is natural that I—that I should think of them for him. I can not bear the thought of being the means of dragging such a man as that into poverty and obscurity: if there had been no alternative, it is true, I should not have been afraid to share *any* lot with him. I know what a noble heart

he has, and I would have struggled and labored to death with him and for him; but there is an alternative. I may be wrong, but I can not bear that he should give up so much for me."

"Wise and right," said Joan. "I hardly expected, my dear Angela, young as you are, that you could have taken so sound and temperate a view of the subject. And now my love," turning to her with such a look as we may imagine that of some superior being purified by suffering—some elder sister of sorrow, watching over the young candidate for immortality, still struggling among those storms which by herself have been overcome, Joan said—

"It may encourage you in supporting the anguish of this moment to be assured by one, who has bled and suffered too, that the pain is not forever, that the bitterness of death *does* pass, and that there is a peace beyond words for those who humbly endeavor for it."

Then she went on talking so kindly; telling her how she had been lacerated in her tenderest affections; and, though not called upon to make the actual renunciation, which was an effort so infinitely difficult, how actually she had suffered from wounded pride—from disappointed affection—from feelings too bitter to be described. She consoled her with the reflection that, painful as was her part, in some of these things she was spared. She exhorted her to accept her cross with patience and humility, and rest in the faith that things were ordered well.

So they sat talking together, that holy woman purified in the fierce furnace of affliction, pouring her rich consolations into that young and fluttering heart; that heart resolved, yet trembling—determined, yet shuddering at the immensity of the height from which she had to fall.

It was determined that immediately upon Mr. Vavasour's return to town Miss Grant should see him; impress him with the unchangeable nature of the resolution taken by Angela; and urge him, by every motive of justice and generosity, to be faithful to the only pledge it was in his power to keep, and fulfill his engagement with Augusta Darby.

Neither Miss Grant nor Angela, had any doubt as to the result of this interference, or that she would succeed in persuading Carteret to yield to necessity, and finally submit to the universal wish of all concerned, and redeem his pledge, and more, by doing reparation to Augusta Darby.

It was agreed between the two friends, that so soon as this should

be effected, it would be no longer possible for Angela to continue at Donnington ; but that, of course, she must quit the place before Mr. Vavasour's visit could be repeated.

You will not suppose there was much difficulty in making arrangements as regarded this part of the business. Angela must seek for another situation, but there need be no hurry for that, said Miss Grant; and for the present she invited her to bring the children down to Widdrington, to which place, she herself purposed retiring as soon as her business with Mr. Vavasour should be completed. The interview with him being the only thing which now detained her in town.

Angela staid the two nights in New Norfolk street, striving hard to compose her spirits and gather a little additional strength and courage, and she then set out again for Donnington.

As soon as the letter, so anxiously expected by Augusta, should actually arrive—that letter which would declare Mr. Vavasour's intentions, she intended immediately to leave the house. She knew that the expediency and propriety of her departure would be felt by all parties.

She should keep herself, therefore, in readiness for quitting Donnington at a few hours' notice, and taking refuge with the friend of the friendless at Widdrington.

CHAPTER LIII.

What is like thee, fair flower,
The gentle and the firm ! thus bearing up
To the blue sky thy alabaster cup,
As to the shower ?

MRS. HEMANS: *The Water Lily.*

CARTERET sat in Mrs. Levet's little lodgings, in the very chair in which Angela had so often sat, in the same little drawing-room which she had occupied, and listened while Mrs. Levet, with the garrulity natural to her, related the tale of her sufferings and her exertions.

Mrs. Levet did not know him, for he had announced himself merely as an old friend of Miss Nevil's ; indeed he was so much changed, that his dearest friend might have passed him by in the

street and not have recognized him. His cheeks were hollow and pale—his face looked thin and sickly—his hair was faded, and his eyes hollow. His whole appearance was that of a man almost worn out with mental sufferings; he stooped a good deal, and his chest was contracted.

Thrown back in that very arm-chair in which Angela had so often rested when spent with labor, his hand now shaking, his face and his eyes now bent upon Mrs. Levet, who, with her usual air of decent shabbiness, stood before him, he listened to the repetition of those details, and a description of those charms and perfections, upon which she was never weary of dwelling.

“And so good-natured as she was with it all the time, I am sure, any one would have thought she had nothing to do but to pity others. I was in great trouble about Tom, then—thank Heaven, that trouble’s over now; and, thanks to that Mr. Vavasour as he went abroad with, he’s become the soberest, quietest, and most attentive husband as ever was. *My* troubles are happily over;—I only wish every body else’s was too,” said kind Mrs. Levet, with a sigh.

“But you were saying something—how kind Miss Nevil was.”

“Ay, that she was, indeed! When I told her all about Tom, and how I couldn’t help loving him in spite of his bad ways, she didn’t, like other folks, scold me, and call me a fool for having such a silly weak heart of my own, as I know I have, sir—but one can *not* help it—she seemed to understand that love is love, and true love the truest thing in the world; and she bade me hope and trust, and things would come right; and go on loving and trusting, said she, with those sweet, soft, bright eyes of hers, beaming like stars on a summer night. She looked as if she could love herself—so it seemed to me. I thought it was so sweet and so knowing of her too—poor young thing, but she looked as if she knew what love-sorrow was as well as I did, poor dear.”

“As how?” said Vavasour; “tell me that.”

“She had once loved a young gentleman—it was Nurse as told me this, sir—as was an artist; not exactly in her own condition of life, said Nurse, and she an officer’s daughter; but he was a real gentleman, as far as looks went, and he fell into a pit and was drowned. She was ever after that, said Nurse, just like a young widow; she never forgot him, but she did not mourn, and despond, and go crying and fretting about, as many a young widow does; if she don’t go gadding, gallanting, and looking for another, which is the more common. No! she remembered what we are taught, sir—that there is a world above where we all shall meet again, and she went about doing

her duty, just as I have told you, working and laboring at her needle to maintain these children. She'd be sitting up at night when all the rest have gone to bed ; when I've been going last up stairs, the light from her candle would be shining under the door, and perhaps, I would be bold enough to open the door quietly, and say, ' Do you want any thing, Miss Nevil ? it's twelve o'clock : ain't you going to bed ? ' ' Yes, Mrs. Levet, by and by, when I've finished what must be done. I want nothing, thank you ; ' and turn round and snuff her candle, and sit there working away. But she got to look pale and thin."

He got up—paced the little room up and down.

" And what was I doing all this time," thought he, " while this young creature was laboring and toiling for those she loved ?—what was I doing ? Strolling among the rocks of the Sicilian shores, watching the waves break upon the sand ; or, maybe, in listless indolence, making some sketch which I had not even the energy to finish."

Then he threw himself down again.

" And with all this she found time to comfort you ?"

" Ay, sir, about Tom. It's a marvel to me, and always will be, how that angel got through all she did, with her gentle, beautiful ways, never losing her temper ; and the children would be so tedious—little children will be, you know ; and Nurse was very cross sometimes, though she loved Miss Angela dearly, that she did : but the old woman, though she is my cousin, has a bit of a temper—no one can deny that. And to see how patient Miss Angela would be with it all, and so careful Nurse should have her rest in the day, because the baby was fractious at nights, when, pretty angel, she wanted rest herself, as I thought, more than any of them."

" But how came she to go to Mr. Darby's, as I heard she did ?"

" Oh, sir, that wasn't it ! First she went out governess into Mrs. Usherwood's ; he's the great Russian merchant, and he's as rich as Cræsus ; and though I know Mrs. Usherwood is rather hard with her servants and so forth, and not the sweetest of tempers, some say, yet, upon the whole, it was something, and the best I could get for Miss Angela, who had no recommendations, you know ; and so she thought—for money got low, and what could her needle-work do, poor thing, stitch as she would, to maintain five ? They give almost nothing for needle-work at the shops. So she was very glad to undertake it. And to see how Mrs. Usherwood did beat her down in the salary ; and to make it more, she engaged to teach music and things ! It was not possible for her to stand all she undertook ; and

so, at last, she fell ill of the nerves, sir: it's a fearful complaint. Some say it's no complaint at all. I've heard doctors say so; and that it's all fancy, if people could only think so—if they could only think so! That's hard work, with all the poor nerves trembling and shaking, and the head I don't know how, and the heart going all ways. Under-work does this mischief to some, but *over-work* does it to many and many and many a poor creature; and then the Lord have mercy upon them!"

Carteret groaned, but he did not speak; he only kept looking at Mrs. Levet, as if he wanted her to go on.

"She was very, very bad at last, and broke down all of a sudden; and then comes that holy saint of a Miss Grant, who's more like the Tabithas and pious women in Scripture than a great London lady, and takes her home with her till she is better. But Miss Grant couldn't maintain her altogether, for though she's a vast fortune, she has such loads and loads of people to help; and a fortune ever so big can't do every thing: so she kept looking out for some nice, quiet situation for Miss Nevil. And lo, and behold, by good luck that dear, precious girl, my own Miss Darby, wants a drawing mistress and a sort of companion: the very place for her, thinks Miss Grant; and that it was."

"That Miss Darby," she ran on, after stopping a few moments to take breath, "*has* a heart, and a right royal one too. I've known her from her cradle; and—Heaven bless her sweet face!—she's a high spirit of her own; but there's a dashing way with her you couldn't help liking, if you were to see it—not like Miss Angela's, to be sure—but there's neither pride nor haughtiness of heart about her; no, she's the kindest, best, dearest creature, that ever the sun shone upon."

He turned round upon his chair, and hid his face against his arm, which rested upon the back of it.

"Well, and dear Miss Darby, the first time I saw them together was in this very room; and there where you sit, sat Miss Darby. She brought Miss Nevil down in her carriage to give her an airing, and bring her to see the children; and there she sat just where you sit; and she'd got the baby on her lap; and the other littles ones standing beside her, showing them playthings she'd bought; and then Miss Nevil was afraid they'd trouble her. 'You be quiet,' says she, 'and let me amuse the plagues, for you are a great deal too weak yet to tire yourself about such rubbish; and I've more strength than I know what to do with,' says she. And with that she begins to toss baby up to the ceiling, and the little one laughing

and screaming for joy, and Miss Angela looking on so loving and so pleased. And then nothing must serve her, but those little ones must all come down and live at Donnington, too, in the very house I used to have, and be so happy in, till poor Tom came courting me. She said the little ones were getting pale, and Miss Angela musn't have to fret; and so there they all are, as happy as the day. Nurse writes me such pretty letters—she knows how I doat upon my darling Miss Darby—and says how *very* kind she's been to Miss Angela, and that she's living there like a queen, or like Miss Darby's own sister; for she treats her just like a sister, and coddles her and messes her up when she isn't well, and makes as much of her as if she were the greatest lady of the land; and never thinks any thing too good for *her* when every thing's good enough for herself. The last account was, that Miss Angela was grown quite well, and as blooming as a rose; and the two young ladies were thicker than ever, and just expecting Mr. Vavasour down, as was my Tom's master, and he was going to marry Miss Darby; but I've heard nothing at all since."

She stopped: he lifted up his head, looked at her, and resumed his former attitude.

Mrs. Levet took this as a hint to go on with her relation; she was never weary of talking, so on she went.

"I was so glad to hear it. And the next news I expect is, that the wedding is fixed; for every body says that Miss Darby has long been in love with Mr. Vavasour; and my Tom says he's sure it's true; and so thinks Nurse, for she says the stars in heaven are not so bright as Miss Darby's eyes, that day he was expected down, which was the day she last wrote. The young ladies had been down to see the children; and she, Nurse tells me—Nurse has the pen of a ready writer—that it was the prettiest sight in the world, Miss Darby looking so happy, and Miss Angela looking so happy to see her so happy, just as a bride and bridesmaid ought to look in a story: and I hope that's what they will both in reality soon be, said Nurse; but I have had no letter since."

There was a pause at last.

"Where is your husband now?" said Carteret, raising his head after some time.

"Gone down with his young master to Sherington, on business of my lord's. I don't expect him back for a week; have you any message for him, sir?"

"No, no; if I have, I will call again."

He got up with looks more disturbed than ever; then he began

to search about the room. In a glass, upon the chimneypiece, there was a small card ; on it a little pencil sketch of one of the children.

“ Who did this ? ”

“ Miss Nevil, to be sure ; she was always drawing when she had a little time.”

“ It seems very clever ; why do you leave it about here ? ”

“ Oh, sir, there were hundreds of them ; but they’re most of them gone to the back of the fire. There’s no value in these little pencil things ; they rub out so, for one thing.”

“ Will you give this card to me ? ”

“ To be sure I will ; take it, and welcome, too ; but take care of rubbing it, for those pencil things do rub out so.”

“ Thank you ; I will take care.”

And, giving Mrs. Levet a sovereign, he took his hat, ran down the little narrow stairs, and departed.

When he got home he found a note from Joan Grant upon the table : it had been lying there some days, awaiting his return.

It was to ask him to fix an hour for a little conversation, which it was necessary she should have with him, and as early as possible, as she was about to leave town for Widdrington.

He looked at the date, and found so much time had elapsed since it was written, that the best thing he could do would be to answer it in person immediately : he therefore sallied forth once more, and soon found himself in New Norfolk street. He inquired for Miss Grant. She was at home ; and he was at once ushered into the drawing-room, where, in a few minutes, she joined him, looking worried and anxious, like every body who had concern in this unfortunate business.

The time since Angela’s departure Joan had passed in a very uncomfortable state of doubt and indecision. She could not satisfy herself as to whether the part she had undertaken was one which it was justifiable in her to assume.

These cases of contending claims and contradictory motives are the grand and real difficulties in the moral life ; and perhaps the most painful trial a good mind has to undergo, is to be called upon to act under this uncertainty of feeling. How sorrowfully has the exclamation, “ If I did but know what was right ! ” escaped from many an honest spirit, called upon sometimes to suffer, or worse, to inflict severe suffering, without the consolation of knowing whether the course that is adopted is the necessary or the right one.

Such a case was this ; and had we any of us been called upon to decide it, what should we have done ?

It is useless to recapitulate the arguments upon either side, with which you are already well acquainted ; the one which brought her to an ultimate decision was the receipt of a letter from Angela, saying that Miss Darby had at last fallen really so ill, and was getting every day so much worse, that nothing, she was convinced, but the putting an end, without loss of time, to the suspense under which she was suffering, could be of the least service to her, or offer any chance of restoring the health either of body or mind. She ended her letter by again declaring that her own resolution remained unchanged ; by reiterating her determination to withdraw herself altogether from the scene, and seek an asylum where she should be heard of no more, unless Mr. Vavasour could be persuaded to do justice, as she called it and thought it, to her friend.

The more generous, however, her determinations, the harder, as you will easily conceive, it became for Joan Grant to perform her part ; but she felt that Angela was right—that her marriage with Mr. Vavasour, under the unhappy circumstances, could conduce to the happiness of no one ; and that the one with Augusta Darby, by doing away with so many difficulties, would restore union and tranquillity at least, if not bestow felicity, upon the whole little community.

She came down, therefore, resolved to persuade Mr. Vavasour to the step Angela desired he should take ; but she came to the task unwilling, repining almost, and with a divided heart, after all.

He looked very pale, and ill, and grave, but rose with much respect in his manner when she came in, and with a few words expressive of his regret that he had not sooner been able to attend the summons contained in her letter, sat down opposite to her, evidently expecting some painful communication, but seeming desirous to lose no time in terminating a suspense which seemed to him more painful than any certainty.

“ Miss Darby is very ill,” began Joan.

“ I am very sorry to hear it,” said he, gravely ; “ I hope her illness is not dangerous ?”

“ Not at present, I should think, from the description I have had of it ; but those sort of diseases become speedily dangerous, unless the proper remedies are applied.”

“ No doubt such remedies have been applied in the case of Miss Darby,” seeming as if resolved not to understand her.

“ Not yet—but I hope they will be.”

To this he said nothing.

"I had a letter from Angela—from Miss Nevil—this morning."

He looked at her, but did not speak; 'his color went and came.

"*She is well,*" said Joan.

"Yes, I dare say I don't doubt."

"*She is well, because she has taken the most generous of resolutions, and the noble warmth of her heart gives her strength.*"

"No one ever doubted her strength of resolution," said he, with a slight touch of bitterness in his tone.

"No one has had cause. She will not fail here; the contest has been a severe one, but she has achieved it; and Mr. Vavasour will, she hopes and believes, suffer himself to be guided by her wishes."

"Her *real* wishes, yes; but he doubts whether she knows them herself."

"She *does* know them; and she has commissioned me to announce, not only her wishes, but her determination: she will not stand in the way of your marriage with Miss Darby."

"My marriage with Miss Darby! Absurd!"

"No, she hopes not. Miss Darby has been a kind friend to Angela, Mr. Vavasour; and there are some hearts to whom the obligations of gratitude are invincible. She bids me say, that if you value her repose of mind, her esteem, or her happiness, you will immediately decide upon taking the steps which can alone insure them, and save the life—perhaps more, the reason—of the unhappy Miss Darby. The state she is in is fearful; one word from you would end it. That word must be written this day."

"And do you think, madam, so meanly of Augusta Darby as to believe she would accept the hand of a man thus offered—thus held back till absolutely forced from him, against every conviction of his head and every feeling of his heart?"

"Under the circumstances, I believe she would; because this reluctance on his part has been, as much as possible, hidden from her; and with the flattery of affection, she has no idea of the extent to which it exists; and for other reasons," added Joan, the deep crimson dyeing her cheek, as it still did, when certain peculiar relations were alluded to.

"I could not have believed it of her. I don't love her, but I had an esteem for her. I can not believe it."

"Alas, alas, Mr. Vavasour! have you yet to learn the lengths of degradation and humiliation to which passion will go?"

"Passion!" said he, with an expression of contempt.

"Nay, do not despise it; an honest passion is, after all, a noble

thing ; and if it get the mastery, as here, let us not, in the pride of our reason, despise the victim. Miss Darby had been taught to love you when a child, and engaged to love you as a girl ; her attachment is rooted in the finest parts of her character—her enthusiasm for what she esteems real worth."

"Enthusiasm for real worth in me !" shaking his head. "She must indeed be strangely infatuated if she sees it in me !"

"Angela has desired me to say that, in the general shipwreck, one may at least be saved—that one is Augusta Darby. She has commissioned me to ask it of you, as the last proof of the regard you once professed for her, to write to her, and that this very day. She further bids me tell you, that if you obstinately refuse to take the step which she believes to be the right one, she will withdraw herself altogether from among us, and you shall never hear of her more. She asked me to say this, because you will not believe in her own letters ; and to second it by saying that I am convinced, that I have no doubt—as, in truth, I am convinced and have no doubt—that, if driven to it, she will carry her threats into execution."

"She need use no threats with me," said he, his face crimsoning, and in the tone of one deeply wounded. "She will be driven into no extreme measures by me."

He rose, and went to the window, keeping his face against it some time.

Then, without turning toward Joan, he kept repeating—

"I thought she had loved me better—I thought she knew me better. But I am not going to resist her will—all is over between us now. She may find some time, perhaps, that she has been mistaken ; but all resistance is over, after such a message. What would she please to have me write to Miss Darby ?" he ended by saying, and, returning, resumed his seat upon the chair.

"What the heart of a man of delicacy and honor should dictate, when writing to one to whom he has solemnly pledged his hand, and to whom he has been virtually engaged for years, when he proposes to fulfill his engagement," said Joan.

"Of course," he went on, with cold indifference in his tone, "it will be necessary that I should make my appearance—go a courting," with a bitter, sarcastic smile, "as it is called, to Donnington. But *she* is there. I should think it would be better she should not be there. I might, perhaps, faint away in *my* turn."

And he laughed.

Then, rising again from his chair, his face all in a glow, he returned to the window.

Poor, poor Joan Grant ! this was a hard scene, too, for her.

He stood some time at the window ; he seemed struggling with himself. After a while he came back once more, resumed his chair, drew it close by Miss Grant, and, taking her hand, said,

“ This must have been a very painful office for you to undertake. I see it in your face. I thank you for the feeling I read there. In the mortifying, humiliating position in which I stand, it seems to me as if I must forfeit the respect of every human being, as I am now forfeiting my own. Yes, Angela !” he cried, “ this last proof of my love you have exacted—take it ! It is my all ! It is myself you ask for—take it ! take it ! And now I am no longer the same,” said he, relapsing from his excitement, and falling back in his chair ; “ And I am ready to be Miss Darby’s or Miss Anybody’s. But what ought I to write ?”

“ Indeed, I can not advise,” said Joan, looking more and more distressed ; “ indeed, this scene is a most painful one.”

“ I beg your pardon ; I most earnestly and sincerely beg your pardon,” said he, struck with a sudden recollection, “ pray do not let me give you the pain of saying a word more. I am becoming quite brutal—worse than brutal. I will go away and write such a letter as I think you would approve ; and which even Angela, perhaps, may deign to like.”

He rose to go, with considerable hurry in his manner ; but when he had reached the door he turned round, and coming up to where Joan sat, said again in a low, hurried tone,

“ But she, she ! Don’t let her be at Donnington—pray don’t ! I could not command myself. It’s very weak, very foolish ; but indeed I could not.”

“ She is coming to me at Widdrington ; fear nothing.”

“ There is no danger of our *ever, ever* meeting again. Is that what you intend me to understand ?”

“ Yes.”

He said not a word more ; but immediately left the room.

CHAPTER LIV.

The shepherd in Virgil grew acquainted with Love, and found him an inhabitant of the rocks.—JOHNSON.

THE fever upon her spirits had already made sad ravages with the fine health and spirits of Augusta Darby.

Angela was at once touched and alarmed by the state in which she found her upon her return.

She had grown already much thinner; her large black eyes were sunk in their sockets, and sparkled with a gloomy fire; her cheek was yellow, her skin parched and dry, her hand burning, and her voice, when she spoke, sounded so hollow that her words were almost inarticulate.

She had scarcely closed her eyes during Angela's absence; and the actual torture in which she was kept by the state of her feelings had done in a few hours the work of years.

Angela found Mrs. Darby at length awakened to the true state of her daughter's health, abandoning herself to the most pitiable despair.

Her character, languid as it was, was not incapable of affection, and her distress was now extreme; yet in the midst of it such was the gentleness of her habits—the politeness, I might call it, only that seems such an odd word to use at a juncture like this—that she received Angela with her usual kindness, though not with quite her usual cordiality, for she was much too unhappy for that.

She blamed herself, she lamented her daughter, she vainly reiterated her wishes that Mr. Vavasour could be brought to do her justice; or, at least, to come down once more to Donnington: for she felt certain that Augusta would die if she did not see him again, and soon.

Venting her feelings thus in vain lamentations, but incapable of resolution or action, thus Angela found Mrs. Darby; but the mother's prognostications found an answer in the terrors of her own heart. Young herself, and experienced in the fatal secrets of passion, she but too well sympathized in the intensity of that longing which asks only once more to behold, once more to hear the voice of the loved

and lost one; that piteous cry of the heart—Give him back but for one single instant, lest I die!

Under these agitations of terror, pity, and generous affection, she had written the last urgent letter, the terms of which she felt could not be resisted; and now she was able to sit by Augusta's bed, hold the feverish hand, no longer withdrawn, bathe her burning temples, and whisper to her the assurance she felt that Vavasour would write, and would return to her, and love her as dearly as ever.

"No, he will not love me," said Augusta; "I do not hope that: but such is my madness, let him hate me, so he be but near me!"

"You remember Phédre," she went on; "I have talked to you before of Phédre, Angela.

O haine de Vénus! O soif sanguinaire! . . .

You remember the lines. I am a victim like her to an irresistible fury; and I care not what becomes of me, if I may only see him once more."

And now, my dear, dear girls, this was a young woman like any one of you; and she had a good heart, and her feelings were not particularly violent, and her inclinations were generous and good: but she was precisely in the position of those hopeless victims of the blind fury of the gods, as they thought, which are pictured in the fables, or in the true histories, perhaps, of that old heathen world.

Virtually, Augusta Darby was a heathen, too.

She had been baptized; she went to church every Sunday; she would have been very much surprised to have been told that she was not a Christian—and a pretty so-so Christian, too. And yet, to all real intents and purposes, she was as complete a heathen as if she had lived in the days of that victim to the offended goddess of Love whose misery so truly pictured her own.

My dear, dear girls, consider in what a dangerous world you live; how complicated are the social relations; how numerous the difficulties and obstacles that arise before many a marriage can be brought to pass.

And yet, difficult as it is to make a marriage, nothing in the world is more easy than to lose a heart; for though our social relations are become perplexed, entangled, and unnatural, the heart is just as true to nature, as susceptible to love, as weak to passion, as it was three thousand years ago; and the experience of every day proves it.

And there are thieves abroad; and men are often extremely unprincipled and careless in showing those tender attentions which insensibly steal the treasure away, and then going and leaving you,

despoiled of yourself, to get yourself back as well as you can ; and a sore travail it is to effect this : and the pilgrimage of Psyche amid the cruel rocks and rending thorns, with bleeding feet and bosom, is but a type of it. Therefore, my dear, dear girls, keep the heart well, for out of it, indeed, are the issues of life.

Restrain imagination ; resist the delusions of passion ; anchor your weakness upon the Rock of ages ; be not too much absorbed in this world, or the things of this world ; keep steadily in view that better country, that harbor of rest, to which, through all the pains and disappointments of life, you are inevitably tending. Believe these things to be *real*—cling to them as *real*, and then we shall have no modern Phédres, like poor Augusta Darby.

At last the letter came.

It was a sore trial, but it was the last very sore trial Angela had to go through, when she took the letter out of the bag, and resolutely carried it herself into Augusta's room.

Augusta cast her eyes over the direction, then glanced at Angela, as if to see how she stood it.

Angela was paler even than usual, that was all.

"And you really *can* do this?" cried Augusta, holding the still unopened letter in her hand.

"Yes, Augusta, I really can, and do wish you to be happy."

"Then I am happy," said she, with a scream of joy ; "for he is mine!"

The letter was brief :

Augusta, I am not going to deceive you ; I love another—that other rejects me. I offer you—I will not say what remains of a heart, for I have none to offer, but what remains of myself, if you will accept such a miserable return for the affection of which I have never been worthy. I don't ask you to write, unless you too, reject me, as *she* has done. You have better cause. If I hear nothing, I shall be down at Donnington on Friday. Don't wait dinner—I would rather come in when it was over.

C. L. F. VAVASOUR.

"On Friday!" and she looked at Augusta. She seemed to wish to say something, yet not to know how.

Even Augusta, changed as she was in heart, could not bring herself to say to Angela : "You must go away—you must. Leave me to enjoy my happiness alone ; and you go—turn out—turn out into

the wide, inhospitable world once more. We are no longer friends—rivals can not be really friends. You have been very good, but I dare not keep you at Donnington now; I dare not run the risk of your ever meeting him more. Henceforward you and I must be strangers.”

Changed as she was, she had not the heart to say this, but she had the heart to feel it. Indeed, she could hardly help feeling it—that was true enough.

“I am going to Widdrington on Thursday,” said Angela, simply; “perhaps you will let Nurse and the children stay till Miss Grant has prepared to receive them, or, rather, till poor Nurse has had time to get ready to set out with them?”

At this Augusta rose suddenly up in her bed, and caught her in her arms; she pressed her own poor, faded, burning face against Angela’s bosom, straining her toward her with a force that told what she was feeling.

But she said not one word; she could not speak; she sank back again upon her pillow, and then she began to cry.

She wept long and bitterly; then she turned her face to the other side, and she fell fast asleep.

Angela sat by her, listening to her quiet breathing.

I will not venture to say she was happy—I will not venture to say even at peace; these are the agonies of the trial, and the agony of such a trial is fierce: the spirit was most willing, but the flesh was weak.

She felt a dark vail falling—falling—slowly darkening over all her prospects—slowly severing her from the world of love, hope, light, joy. She felt as many a victim of domestic tyranny or priestly superstition may have felt, as the scissors sever her long hair and the black vail slowly covers her.

Henceforth to be as one dead, except—ah, grievous exception!—forgetfulness.

Henceforth for the heart to be buried as in a sepulcher; but, ah, to falter and to beat within the living tomb!

A strange terror crept over her: it was the spirit of Despair that passed by, and the hair of her flesh did rise.

It was done. Was it really done?—irrevocably done?

Ah, we know not our own weakness; we know not how we are supported by hope—indistinct, unconfessed, but flattering, beguiling hope—when resolving upon a vast sacrifice—the hope that, after all, something will occur—mercy will be shown—and the immense, the infinite agony be spared.

Now it was all over, and she had nothing left to do but to bid farewell to what had been so dear—to Augusta's friendship and Cartaret's love, and leave them to be happy together without her.

Augusta slept many hours—indeed, until quite late in the evening; then she awakened, looking very drowsy, but very comfortable; asked for some tea, turned round, and slumbered again.

Angela went to Mrs. Darby to tell her how much better Miss Darby appeared to be, and that she believed Mr. Vavasour had written to say he was coming down on Friday; she ended by saying that Miss Grant had invited her with the children to pay her a visit at Widdrington, and that, if Mrs. Darby would permit it, she intended setting out upon Thursday, leaving the children to follow as soon as they could.

Mrs. Darby only said—

“Very discreet and pretty of you, Miss Nevil! I must say, and always shall say, that you are the best-behaved young person I ever met with. Certainly, my dear, you have my permission to go. And when do you think of coming back?”

“Perhaps not at all. Miss Darby will scarcely want a companion now,” said Angela; “but if you will allow me, I will write to you about this from Widdrington.”

The next day was Wednesday.

Augusta rose in the morning, apparently quite recovered, though rather weak and pale.

Angela was busy in her room, making her packages, and preparing for her final departure.

Augusta came in, in a sort of invalid dress, and sat down upon one of her boxes. She seemed as if she could not bear to be parted from her upon this last day, and yet as if she had nothing to say to her.

There she sat watching her.

“Let me do that,” she would say, as some little occasion or other occurred in which she could render her assistance—such as folding gloves, rolling ribbons, and so forth; the rest of the time she sat there watching Angela's operations, and saying nothing.

To converse was quite as impossible to Angela.

She went steadily on with what she was about, mechanically, as it were, for she dared not trust herself to think. Her face was quite calm, but so excessively wan that it was frightful; and there was such an almost preternatural stillness in all her motions as she glided about, that it seemed scarcely like the movement of an

earthly being. All this time, nevertheless, she looked very, very beautiful; there was that in her countenance which appeared to be divine.

Augusta sat there watching her with great attention. If her heart smote her as she gazed, she gave not the slightest sign of it; but this is certain, that the image of this pale but heroic sufferer was so deeply impressed upon her mind, that, sleeping or waking, she felt as if she should never get rid of it; as those who have witnessed the infliction of great torture commanded by themselves have been known to start, and shudder, and turn pale, as the reminiscence of the victim suddenly presents itself; so Augusta would henceforth frequently start and change color, no one knew why, in the midst of scenes of cheerfulness or indifference: but she never confessed her feelings to any one.

Her presence in this room all day both consoled and pained Angela; her silence, her abstraction, her apparent preoccupation, formed a sad contrast to the cordial affection which such a short time ago had subsisted between them. This was all very painful; but then her presence there, a something indescribable in her look when their eyes met, and in her tones when she spoke, had consolation in them.

It was, upon the whole, a day of that uncomfortable restraint which arises when hearts once closely united are estranged.

The next morning there was a painful parting.

Augusta held Angela long closely embraced without speaking; then she pressed her dry, burning lips against her forehead; again strained her almost passionately to her heart; and then seemed to tear rather than to turn herself away.

Bidding adieu to Donnington forever—turning back her head, and watching that house where she had been so mildly treated, and so happy, till it was lost in the bend of the avenue—Angela set forward.

She was in Augusta's carriage—that carriage in which, side by side, they had so often sat and prattled so cheerfully together; now she was in it alone, and for the last time.

Augusta would not allow her to travel in a public carriage upon this occasion; she had insisted upon sending her under the care of her own man-servant, who was to engage and pay the post-chaises at the different stages.

One night must be passed upon the road; the second evening she entered the town of Norman's Bridge, just as the gas-lamps were being lighted, and was driven down the High-street, now improved,

cleansed, drained, widened, and filled with good houses and handsome shops.

The carriage crossed the bridge, still bathed with the waters of the estuary, now swelling and heaving under the light of a full moon, which, rising in all her splendor, tinted the splendid woods and plantations of Widdrington, and, drawing up to the front door, she was received into the arms of Joan Grant, who stood upon the steps ready to receive her.

Mr. M'Dougal being a little behind her, with his silver hair and figure bent with age, leaning upon his staff, forming no unpleasing contrast with the fine erect form, the raven hair, and large dark eyes of Joan; and the sweet girlish figure, the soft features, and delicate brown tresses, of her young guest.

The cordiality, the kindness, the more than kindness—the fervor of Miss Grant's reception, expressed more than her usual tenderness and affection; there was respect, there was reverence in it; and the sad heart of Angela, which had been gradually closing, as it were, upon itself, under the melancholy reflections of that long, solitary journey, expanded and warmed again in the good and generous woman's arms.

Oh, when the virgins arise and trim their lamps, what treasures of the sacred oil shall be found accumulated by thee!

Saintly virgin—holy woman—hand of action and heart of love!

What a long succession of days hast thou already counted, filled full with thy good deeds! Every hour, as it has passed, has added its tale of useful exertion, wise reflection, pious word, or kindly deed. And as they have passed in saintly succession, roses, it is true, have not been showered upon thy path, but a halo of the light from above has settled around thy head.

And there thou art, invested with a beauty which is not of this world—a beauty which time has given, but which time shall never take away; that beauty which shines forth as shone the face of the great prophet when he had been with God.

Widdrington was not much altered since its former possessors had left; Mrs. Grant, and after her Joan, had each of them taken an almost pious pleasure in preserving it as it then stood. Perhaps, the thought still lingered that its ancient owners would some time return and be restored to the forfeited possession. They seemed both to feel as if they were but tenants after all, and not real proprietors, and in some respects to dislike to exercise any of the rights of ownership upon it. The household, the gardens, the walks, the whole *entourage*, were preserved in the original order, and as little

altered as the nature of vegetable growth would permit; but the plantations had been enlarged, the land improved and cultivated to the highest point of modern perfection. And the whole stood, as it might seem, preserved by the hand of some good steward, waiting till the true master should be heard knocking.

Into that very drawing-room where Edward had been received on his return from travel, upon the night never to be effaced from her memory, and at the recollection of which she yet shuddered—into that very room, a bright blazing fire in the same grate, and the sofa at that time occupied by Lord Strathnaer, wheeled round for the accommodation of the declining minister, Angela was ushered, to adorn once more with her youth and beauty that place which had been so long widowed of these things.

Her cloaks and wraps were taken off, she was placed in the best place by the fire, and was immediately surrounded with every thing that could make her comfortable. Had it been our good young queen—whom every worthy heart delights to honor, because she sets an example of goodness and honor—they could hardly have made more of her—that good old sarcastic minister, and that gentle but serious and quiet Joan Grant.

And so it went on from day to day.

Disappointed herself in her youth's early dream of happiness, Joan Grant's heart could bleed for others; restored herself to peace, and leading a life of serene and tranquil enjoyment, if not felicity, her example and her experience might encourage others.

Angela's spirits sank a good deal at first—over-excited they had been, and when all was over, it was natural they should give way.

Joan had patience.

The greatest proof of real kindness in these cases is to have patience, not to be in too great a hurry to see people happy again.

People are so good natured, so impatient for pain to end and wounds to heal, that they forget there is such a thing as skinning over, and leaving a sore to fester within. They forget that happiness is a spontaneous thing—it will come when it will come—it is of those spirits that will not be commanded. The mistake proceeds in general from their kindness, though sometimes, I fear, from mere weariness; but it is a great mistake to be disappointed because the poor sufferer can not get quite well in what *they* think a reasonable time. They begin to measure this reasonable time by an arbitrary standard of their own—necessarily false; for who shall take measure of the depth of another's anguish? No doubt there are very im-

patient, rebellious, and wearisome sufferers, who will do nothing for themselves; but I am not thinking of such. I am thinking of those who evidently do their best to bear their own burden, as all right-minded people should, and to resist melancholy and cultivate cheerfulness as much as they can; and I beg of all sympathizing friends to do as Joan Grant did, and not to be disappointed because, after all, those who have lost all that made life delightful can not be easily happy again.

Angela found it very difficult.

She was patient, gentle, perfectly resigned, and submissive—she occupied herself, and battled with herself, and endeavored to overcome that disgust of all enjoyment—that distaste of life, which had laid hold of her; but she could not be happy. Her kind friend saw this well, but she hoped for her who was too utterly a bankrupt in happiness to hope for herself: she knew that time would do its work at last, and the sun of peace return.

The little children and good old Nurse, now grown so cross there was no bearing her, arrived soon after safely at Widdrington, and ran about, and made those halls ring once again with infant voices, as they had done in the days long passed by.

Joan would start and sigh as the laughter of the little boys would suddenly echo in the hall, and watch them from her window as they ran about and played upon the lawn, and under the trees where she had run about and played herself.

The spirit of other times rose then to her memory with a vividness which she had hoped was past.

She spent a good deal more time than she could well spare watching them through her window.

Mr. M'Dougal, too, might be seen slowly walking under the trees, his silver hair falling upon his shoulders, his staff supporting his tottering steps, hand in hand with that nice little Lucy, talking to her and instructing her, directing her young unfolding mind, as he had done by his beloved Joan years ago.

Then Angela would steal out, looking very pale, but very gentle and composed, and would try to play a little with the youngest boy; sometimes she could, sometimes she could not; but she was getting better, upon the whole, every day.

She was not going into a consumption or into a decline. But she had suffered very much in body and mind during the last eighteen months, and she wanted rest more than any thing.

And rest she now enjoyed.

CHAPTER LV.

One struggle more, and I am free—
One troubled sigh to love and thee—
Then back to busy life again.

BYRON.

AT Widdrington there are self-sacrifice, death to to the dearest affections, the destruction of all that seems destined to make life happy; but there are resignation, piety, and peace.

There are none of these things at Donnington. *There* are success and the triumph of self-will and passion—and there are misery and gloom.

It was but as every one must have expected—Augusta's happiness was of short duration, if happiness at all it could be called. It lasted till that hour so earnestly desired, so ardently longed for, arrived—the hour of Vavasour's return to Donnington, and then there was an end of it.

He tried his best to behave well, for he was really sorry for Augusta; he felt that he had used her ill, and her kindness to Angela had filled him with gratitude, or rather, had made him feel that he ought to feel very grateful. He had with much difficulty been made to understand by his mother, that Augusta was ignorant of his extreme reluctance to fulfill his engagement, and that, with so much to bestow upon her side, it was a mark of generosity, and not a proof of want of delicacy, which made her overlook the sort of backwardness she must have perceived.

He listened and assented, partly from extreme resentment against Angela; for there is one irremissible crime in the eyes of a true lover—one thing no sense of justice can ever make him forgive, and that is, the rejection of himself. His extreme resentment against Angela made him actually wish to be persuaded into liking Augusta. But his pale, worn-out, miserable countenance, when he arrived at Donnington as late on Friday evening as he possibly could contrive, told a tale that was not to be mistaken.

They met as uncomfortably as could possibly be—in public; that is to say, in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Darby, for there were no visitors in the house. Augusta was covered with confusion, which she strove to conceal under an air of frankness and ease which

he thought almost audacious, and felt something of the old dislike of other days. And he who intended to be polite, gentle, and affectionate, was cold as ice, his countenance frozen, his manner reserved, his brow darkened, and his whole manner embarrassed with the effort he made to hide his distress.

The next day it was even worse.

The family breakfasted together, and after breakfast was over, Augusta had hoped that he would ask her to walk with him, and that some explanation would take place. She had at breakfast again fallen into the great but common mistake, of endeavoring to hide her awkwardness and anxiety under the affectation of high spirits. She rattled and laughed, she almost coquetted—poor Augusta!—till he, fretted beyond his power of endurance, thoroughly displeased and disgusted with what he thought her insensibility to their most painful situation, rose up as soon as breakfast was over, left the room, and returned no more till the family were assembled at dinner.

He spent his morning, not roaming among the woods, for there were unfortunately no woods to hide him, but wandering over the bare, bleak hills for miles. He did not, in justice to him it must be confessed, when, restless and impatient, he took his hat and hurried out of the house, intend to absent himself during the whole morning, but he walked so fast and so far—he was so absorbed in his own wretchedness, that it was not till he perceived the short day of that season of the year was closing, and the sun sinking behind the distant hills, that he thought how far he was from home, and reflected upon the strange neglect of his conduct. He then turned back, but it was dark before he came in.

The drawing-room was empty—every one gone up to dress.

He could only do the same.

There were a few gentlemen to dinner this day.

The state in which Augusta had spent the morning had been indeed most harassing, distressing, and painfully irritating. She had put on her shawl and bonnet, and had lingered about in the flower-garden and avenue, every moment expecting he would come and join her: but he came not.

The luncheon-bell rang. She went in. She of course expected to find him there—she should at least see him; but he never appeared.

She was still weak, and she felt very much tired by this time, and she was obliged to go up into her room to lie down—most unwillingly she was obliged to do it—she felt so very reluctant to leave the drawing-room, where he was sure to join the party when he

came in. Impatient to go down again, she lay upon her bed just half an hour, counting the minutes by her watch as she lay; then she got up and came down stairs, expecting to find him sitting with her mother.

But Mrs. Darby was dozing upon the sofa by herself.

She sat down—she took the “Peerage,” that tiresome “Peerage!” She tried to look it over. She read all about Lord Missenden’s family. Then she took her mother’s embroidery; she tried to work a little: he should not, thought she, when he came in, find her doing nothing—sitting there as if she had nothing on earth to do but wait for him. It grew dark, and the dressing-bell rang, and as Augusta entered her own room she could not help shedding a few tears.

She tried to look cheerful and composed when she entered the drawing-room, where he, already dressed, was sitting with Mr. and Mrs. Darby and a few of the gentlemen, but her hand shook and her lips quivered.

He looked up at her in a deprecating sort of manner; he felt he had been rude and unkind. And as he led her out to dinner, and her arm, still quivering, rested upon his, he could not help gently pressing it to his side, and saying—

“I lost myself, and could not find my way back for hours. I never saw such a country—there does not seem a landmark in it.”

“It wants features, certainly,” she said, in a low voice, for her heart was full.

Her emotion, and her evident endeavor to conceal it, interested him; he called himself a brute, and he tried, as he sat by her at dinner, to enter into conversation, and to pay her those attentions which their present relations seemed to demand.

But it was all in a constrained, forced way: he could not help that, nor could she help perceiving it.

When the gentlemen came up to tea he again approached her, and presently he asked her to play a game at chess.

So down the two lovers sat to that sublime game—that most convenient game, which has occupied many an empty head, and has soothed many a full heart; and which is a very common resource of lovers, whether they are so fond of each other’s company as to be indifferent to every thing, so they may be together, or whether they are so indifferent to one another as to be very much at a loss for something to say.

It is painful to trace the progress of suffering, where doubtless there is wrong; and yet not such great, such unquestionable wrong,

as to awaken that desire which seems natural to the human heart for retribution.

Unquestionably, Augusta was wrong; and yet, what palliations might she not offer to her conscience under the peculiar circumstances of the case! She had so much to bestow—the advantage to her cousin, and to his whole family, from a marriage with her, would be so great; and then she indulged herself with believing that her claim being prior to, was really stronger than that of Angela.

The conduct of Vavasour had been more reprehensible still; and this, indeed, he was as ready to acknowledge as any one could be.

The sense of his own blamable conduct was what pressed most painfully upon him; it was more painful even than that obstinate revolt of the heart, which was not to be overcome.

How bitterly, as he paced his room in the dead of the night, when all seemed at rest but his unquiet spirit; how bitterly did he regret the indolent carelessness in which his life had been spent—that indifference to rational objects—that want of serious exertion, of those strenuous and persevering habits which render a man master of his own destiny, and independent of the smiles or frowns of fortune; more than all, how did he regret the culpable self-deception in which he had allowed himself to indulge with respect to his cousin's feelings, and the want of firmness and courage which had prevented him from at once vindicating his own liberty.

He could not look at Augusta, and observe the changed and faded cheek, the heavy eye, and languid, spiritless movements, without feelings of remorse as well as pity; and he would fain have endeavored, by his present conduct, to make amends for the pain she had endured: but what could he do?

It was true he could abstain, and he did abstain, from any repetition of the open neglect of the first morning: he remained with her and Mrs. Darby in the drawing-room in the mornings, he walked with her, and he rode with her, but he could not simulate what he did not feel—and without that, of what use was all the rest?

When the duty was done, when the walk and the ride were duly over, an hour might still remain before dressing-time which he could call his own, and then he would spring out of one of the windows at the back of the house, where he could not be observed from any of the rooms she occupied, and rushing forth in the dusk of these November evenings would breathe, as it were, with freedom, emancipated from the tasks he had to perform.

It was impossible, in the mean time, that Augusta should disguise

this coldness from herself; and yet she had not wisdom enough to say, she had not generosity enough to say, Go and be happy your own way. She would keep flattering herself.

And certainly there would be moments when he was kinder—when her evident depression, her weakness and unhappiness, would really touch his heart; and then there was again that something in his eyes, and in the accents of that voice, so sweetly tender, which exercised over her so irresistible a fascination.

One thing, however, became certain during these days of pain, and struggle, and contradictory feelings, and fond indulgence of passion. Augusta, far from gaining strength, only grew weaker and weaker every day.

She was well aware of this, though it seemed to escape the notice of those around her. Sometimes she was glad; at others, she shuddered at the idea. For there are none as she was that do not shudder at the thought that they must die. And then, after all, to leave him! and ah—too cruel thought! leave him to be happy with another!

But as her sickness increased, her thoughts began to change.

In the desolation of her heart and the loneliness of her own sick-room, in which she was now often obliged to remain for hours, striving for rest and to obtain some little accession of strength to carry on this painful battle—in her misery and her solitude of heart she began to think of Angela.

In her hours of lonely and unassisted suffering she thought of that kind friend who had so warmly sympathized in her feelings, and supported her in her alternations of hope and fear—had listened to the perpetually repeated tale with unwearied attention, and beguiled many a weary hour with her conversation.

She began, too, to awaken to something very like remorse for the unkindness, the ingratitude, with which she had repaid the immense sacrifice Angela had offered to her happiness; her heart was gradually growing softer and better.

The mild influences of sorrow were no longer quite in vain.

She began to long to see this generous friend once more, and offer some compensation for former coldness.

CHAPTER LVI.

From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle, and fight, and pray ;
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day.

Hymn.

ANGELA might now have been at Widdrington about six weeks.

She had received scarcely any intelligence of what was going on at Donnington, for Augusta's letters (she still continued, from time to time, to write) were brief, hurried, and to the last degree unsatisfactory.

She never, in one single instance, alluded to Mr. Vavasour or to her own situation ; an account of the flower-garden, of trees planted or cut down, of company coming or not coming to dinner, of what were the expectations from a new race-horse, or any of those uninteresting trifles which made up the sum of life at Donnington, were what they were filled with.

Any thing, every thing—but of herself and of him, not one word.

Lady Missenden, however, took care to inform Miss Grant that all was going on as well as she could possibly wish ; that the settlements were being drawn, and in a manner particularly satisfactory to herself ; that Mrs. Darby's confidential maid, Mrs. Lewis, had been in town to give orders about the wedding-clothes ; and that she had been very busy helping to choose bonnets, cloaks, and dresses.

She told of six bridesmaids, young ladies with whose names Angela was scarcely acquainted, who were already selected and invited, and of the presents beginning to shower in upon all sides. Her relations were lively and long.

Lady Missenden seemed as happy and well satisfied as it was possible to be ; and she evidently took pains to display her satisfaction before Miss Grant, and, through her, before Angela.

But she might have spared herself all this trouble.

Miss Grant took good care that not one of these painful details should reach Angela's ear ; she simply, upon the receipt of one of Lady Missenden's letters of six sheets of tiny note-paper, carefully paged, told her that all was going on, as it appeared, to the general satisfaction.

No one mentioned Miss Darby's state of health. There was not the slightest reason given to suppose that she had not recovered her usual strength and spirits.

Great was Angela's surprise, therefore, to receive one morning the following letter—

“N——'s Hotel, C—— Street.

“MY DEAR FRIEND—MY DEAR ANGELA,

“I am here for advice. I have been getting worse, I believe; and my mother and others get frightened about me at last. My poor mother could not rest, without bringing me up here to see Dr. F——. Angela, this is no case for a physician. You have told me of, or have tried to lead me to, a Physician who can heal a broken spirit, and cast forth the evil demon; but I would not listen to your good teaching then.

“I wish I had. I don't much think that they will ever get me down to Donnington again, and I don't much care. I dislike the idea of dying in an hotel; but what matters it?

“I wish—dear Angela, how I wish! we could but be as we once were together, when you were loving and I was kind. They were happy days those, were they not? The happiest I ever knew. People used to call me such a happy person; how little they really knew! We can not be as we once were again—that is over forever!

“I think I should be more sorry to leave this world if I were not sure of that; but, Angela, be that as it may, I mourn to see you again. I believe it is a strange longing; but I want to rest my head against your arm, and see you looking at me, looking at me, and so fall asleep.

“Will you come to me? There is nobody in town you wouldn't like to see. They are gone down to Missenden. Why should I not just say, he has been very considerate and kind? I believe he is truly sorry for me. Will you come to me, Angela? I am sure you will.”

“Thou shalt do no murder!”

No, thou shalt not.

But who commits murder?

Who is the hardened, lost, degraded sinner, capable of the frightful deed?

One in a thousand? One in ten thousand—in a hundred thousand—in a million?

The commandment is obsolete.

Except as far as a few poor, wretched, depraved, degraded human beings, are concerned, the commandment is obsolete.

Ah, write it upon brass! engrave it with an iron pen, in characters indelible! blazon it in gold! Let all see—let him who runs read!

The commandment of God! Ah, poor, wretched, sinful human nature, the commandment is never obsolete!

He who has wished unlawfully to call the wife of another his own, hath committed adultery already in his heart.

He who hath wished the death of another, hath committed murder in his heart.

It is an every-day temptation; the Great Reader of Hearts, in His infinite mercy, grant that it be one rarely yielded to!

Angela was indeed startled when they met.

The dark hair was folded over Augusta's temples, under an invalid cap; and she wore a long, loose dressing-gown—her whole appearance in frightful contrast to the once dashing gayety of Miss Darby. Her temples were shrunk and thin, her face appeared preternaturally lengthened, her cheeks were hollow, her eyes looked large, but were sunk in their sockets, her form had wasted away, and her smile was ghastly.

Angela hung over her as thus she lay back, supporting herself with difficulty in her arm-chair, and breathing with difficulty and pain.

Never was ruin more complete, and never was it consummated in a shorter time.

The two friends met, embraced, and felt as if the past had not been.

There was no mistaking the countenance of either; Angela's was open and sincere as the day, Augusta's filled with tenderness and confiding affection.

They were alone, and long they sat together; and Augusta rested her aching head upon her friend's true and faithful bosom, and her poor heart beat more calmly, and her breath came easier.

Angela now persuaded her to lie down, and to rest, as she had wished, supported by her arm. She hoped that, now the first agitation of their meeting was over, she might compose and sleep a little; it was plain that sleep was what she most of all wanted. But she could not sleep.

She lay, however, evidently more at ease, and breathing with less difficulty; her eyes still fixed upon Angela's face.

That face—that kind, sweet, anxious, affectionate face.

A blessing had been upon that face. Pale it was—melancholy was the eye ; but it was all harmony, and tenderness, and peace.

What a contrast to the haggard features of her unhappy friend, worn out, defaced, ruined by the ravages of passion !

Augusta laid her own thin, feverish, wasted, withered hand, upon the soft, delicate, cool hand of Angela ; pointed out the difference, and sighed.

“ Yes,” said Angela, gently ; “ but you will be better soon. You have had much to suffer, I understand ; but, believe me, it is over now. You must try not to feel so much, Augusta. You used to hate my philosophy, you know ; but you must learn a little of it—indeed you must.”

“ Do you think I shall ever get better, then ?”

“ I have no fear of it, with proper care. I don’t think they *have* taken proper care of you, my dear ; you must put yourself into my hands—you must indeed. I am a great leech, you know, of old,” trying to speak cheerfully ; but then the thought of her fruitless exertions for Margaret and her father crossed her, and she sighed.

“ But your case is not like theirs,” she said, as if thinking aloud. “ Yours is nothing but an affection of the nerves and spirits. I am positive it is only that ; what does the doctor say ?”

“ Why he calls it nervous. Ah, Angela ! the convenient term ; but it’s no matter !”

“ Yes, but it is of very great matter,” said Angela. “ Trust yourself to me ; do, dearest Augusta ; let me stay with you and nurse you.”

She made a noble effort with herself, and added quite calmly and distinctly :

“ When Mr. Vavasour returns to town, if you are better, I shall go back to Widdrington ; if not, it will be only necessary to forbid his coming to see you while I am here. It would not be proper for us to meet again at present ; and that is the only thing you will not ask me to do for you, Augusta.”

They remained together.

Angela nursed and tended her friend with that judgment and solicitude which, in such cases, does more for the patient than all that the wisest of physicians can prescribe.

And at last Augusta began to grow better.

The return of Mr. Vavasour to town was delayed, by various circumstances, beyond the day appointed. His absence, which

could not in this case give pain as a proof of indifference, greatly assisted her recovery. It gave her harassed feelings time to compose, and obtained for her that rest from hourly agitation which she so dreadfully wanted.

His letters were extremely kind—anxious—almost tender.

Augusta grew better and better rapidly.

Like many others, however, after their recovery from a severe illness, where they have met death, as it were, face to face, she seemed considerably altered. She was more serious and more silent than she had been under her worst sufferings. Sometimes she would sit abstracted for hours; at times there was much composure in her countenance and demeanor; at others, she would be hurried and restless again, as before.

This went on for some time.

However, at last, she grew so much better that Mrs. Darby, by her doctor's advice, proposed to take her down to Donnington upon the following Friday, this being Wednesday; and it was agreed that Angela should the same day return to Widdrington.

Wednesday then it was.

Mrs. Darby had this day gone to spend the evening with Lady Missenden; and, expecting to be late, had resolved to stay with her cousin all night, and not to return till the next day; so the two friends were to spend this evening quite alone.

They passed it quietly and comfortably, and with a still increasing confidence and cordiality; and Angela having put Augusta, as usual, to bed, continued to sit by her side for some time talking. At last she appeared to be composing comfortably to sleep; then Angela took her candle and left the room, Augusta dropping the night-bolt after her.

The bed-rooms in this hotel opened into a long and wide gallery, at the end of which were the stone stairs which descended to the hall. The room Angela occupied stood just at the head of these stairs; that of Augusta at the further end of the gallery.

Miss Nevil entered into her room, set her candle upon the table, sat down, and stirred her fire. She was not much disposed to sleep this night, so she kept walking up and down her room for some time, engaged in thought, half tranquil, half melancholy—a mood which she was at this time very apt to indulge, and from which she found much assistance during the internal conflicts she had had to sustain. It was her custom thus to tranquilize her mind before she lay down to sleep. Presently she came to the fire,

sat down, read the usual portion of Scripture—her constant practice before she went to rest; then knelt down, and committed her innocent heart to the Eternal keeping; prayed for all—friends as well as adversaries, if adversaries she had; then laid her head upon a peaceful pillow, and, lulled by the sweet consciousness which attends the earnest endeavor to do well, fell asleep.

Sweet be thy slumbers!

She had dreamed of peaceful things.

She had been walking together with Augusta and Vavasour, she held by an arm of each. They were strolling up and down a fine terrace in a beautiful garden; the flowers were bursting forth around them; roses, and woodbines, and sweet myrtles, perfumed the air; birds sang in the branches, or glanced in colors bright as those of the flowers from side to side; and the sun, bursting through an azure sky, shone forth in his glory.

Suddenly a shrill cry was heard, and, as is common in dreams, the whole scene was changed in the twinkling of an eye; howlings and piercing shrieks filled the air; black wreaths of heavy vapor rose up on all sides and obscured the sky. Terrified, she clasped the arm of Vavasour; but with a desperate effort he flung her from him, crying out aloud—

At the sound she awoke—

“Fire!—fire!—fire!”

She heard the shrieks and howlings, the cries, as in her dream.

“Fire!—fire!—fire!”

Was she asleep or awake?

Was it some hideous nightmare that oppressed her, so that she could hardly breathe? What was the matter?

She struggled desperately with the oppression; she strove to remove the weight from her chest.

“Fire!—fire!—fire!”

Oh, it was a real cry—the fearful cry of real terror! She started up, and flung herself out of bed.

A flash of light burst upward, as it were, outside the window, and illuminated the room, now rapidly filling with smoke, which rose in wreaths through the floor; the heat was already stifling. The wild, fearful cry, of “Fire!—fire!—fire!” the noise and hubbub of people yelling in the street below, was heard. It was the room under her own which was on fire.

She sprang from her bed, hurried on a dressing-gown, thrust her feet into her slippers, and had just time to rush to and unlock the

door, when the flames were seen bursting through the boards of the flooring. Out she rushed, but had presence of mind to turn and shut the door, and found herself, before she knew where she was, running down the stairs.

They were already crowded, as was the passage; people were rushing down half-dressed, and almost beside themselves with terror; for the roaring and crackling of the flames was heard upon every side, and the smoke rendered it already almost impassable.

Instinctively she was rushing down stairs, when a cry was heard—

“The sick lady! Where’s the sick lady?”

It was from the master of the house, who stood upon the landing-place, shouting and screaming to his terrified guests: but he had quite lost his own presence of mind, and was incapable of affording any real assistance.

“The sick lady! Miss Darby!”

“Oh, she’s lost! she’s lost!” cried the poor man, tossing his hands over his head with a cry of horror; “for the gallery is on fire, and no one can get at her.”

As he spoke, a white figure rushed past him up the stairs.

“What are you about? What’s that?—who’s that?” trying to catch hold of her garments. “In the name of Heaven, who’s so mad? The gallery is on fire—the gallery is in flames!”

He missed the rapidly flying drapery, the figure rushed past him, and was instantly enveloped in the smoke, which rolled in thick black volumes down from the head of the stairs. Then followed the roaring of the flames, the cracking and crackling of the flaming boards, the falling of beams, the crashing in of windows, the cries and shouts of men, and the shrieks and screams of women and children: it was appalling!

She had dashed through the smoke, panting and almost suffocated, and had rushed to the end of the gallery.

The air below drew the smoke toward the staircase; it was somewhat clearer at this end, for the fire had not yet extended here.

There was just air enough here for her to breathe, as she flung herself violently against Augusta’s door, screaming—

“Fire!—fire!—fire! Open the door! Open the bolt!”

The door flew open as she threw herself against it. She turned, closed it immediately, and catching Augusta in her arms, said—

“It is too late to escape that way; the gallery at the other end is in flames: we must get out through the window. Don’t be frightened—don’t lose your presence of mind—don’t faint!”

As Augusta, her head reeling and dizzy, and confused with the being thus suddenly awakened to a scene so tremendous, looked as if she scarcely knew whether she was dead or alive, Angela flew to the window and opened it.

It was upon the second floor. She flung herself half-way out, waving her hands, and screeching with all her force—

“Fire-escape! fire-escape! Help! help!”

The whole front of the hotel was by this time wrapped in flames, which, with torrents of smoke, were vomited forth from the windows on the story below.

And now the rattle of the fire-engines rushing along the street was heard.

There was, as usual, some little difficulty about water. At last they began to play.

With little effect: the fire raged on, devouring in its insatiable fury every thing to which it extended.

“Fire-escape! fire-escape! Help! help!”

She made herself heard at last in the midst of the confusion.

“Look there!—look up there! there’s a woman screeching for help!” cried one.

“Ladders! ladders! Fetch ladders!”

Whoever has witnessed that most awful of human catastrophes, a great fire, is horror-struck with the prodigious rapidity with which the flames spread.

A few minutes—a few seconds—make the difference between life and death.

“Can you—dare you, throw yourself down, ma’am?” called out a policeman. “We have no ladders; the flames are spreading fast.”

“Throw feather-beds,” she cried, and then recollected the sheets; they might be knotted together, and support their weight, so as at least to break the fall.

“Help me, dear Augusta!—help me to save both our lives!”

Augusta, reeling with weakness, with hands trembling, endeavored to listen and to do as she directed; while Angela, whose courage and presence of mind we know of old, preserved her calmness and power of thought in an astonishing manner.

“I can but die; the will of God be done!”

This was all that flashed through her mind, as she rushed up the staircase to rescue her friend.

Resigned to die—what is not to be achieved.

She had knotted the bed-clothes together, had thrown the frail support through the window, and was fastening it to the bed-post.

It was high time. The flames were roaring and crackling in the passage; they glared into the room under the door. This frail defense would soon give way, and the whole chamber be in a blaze.

"Come, Augusta, you must let me lower you first; I can do it. Let me fasten the end of the sheet tightly round you. Make haste! make haste!"

Augusta made no resistance, she was perfectly quiet.

She was getting stupefied; she was a mere child.

And now she stood upon the edge of the window, and her head turned dizzy as she looked down upon the depth, and upon the waving, agitated crowd that, now fully aware of the danger of these two helpless women, were watching their motions with an intensity of interest amounting to agony.

"Oh, come down! come down! Oh, stay! stay!—Trust to the sheets! trust to the sheets!—Oh, stay! stay! they'll dash themselves to atoms! The fire is under them; it's over their heads! Throw yourselves out, good creatures, for Heaven's sake! Better break a limb than be burned to ashes! Heaven bless you! throw yourselves down"

Such were the cries and adjurations which sounded from below.

"I can not—I dare not!" turning quite sick and pale. "Save yourself, my own Angela!"

And Augusta fell back from the window.

"No, I will never, never leave you," embracing her with tears. "But try, only try! We can but perish in attempting to escape—we *must* perish here."

"O God of heaven!"

The flames burst through the door, and volumes of smoke rendered them both for the moment invisible from below.

"Here are the ladders! the ladders are come at last!"

"It's too late—too late!" said a policeman, who had been the most earnest and anxious in his endeavors to persuade those above to attempt the descent; "too late! Why could you not bring the ladders sooner?" taking them from the man's hand; "it's all over by now."

They raised the ladders, however, against the wall, and the policeman immediately ascended.

One body had fallen close by the window, the other lay with an arm under her companion's head, as if her last effort had been expended in endeavoring to raise her for the chance of air.

They were yet untouched by the flames.

The intrepid policeman had entered the burning room, and, lifting up first one and then the other of the bodies, had reached them down to those who stood upon the ladder below him. Having done that, he had just time to descend himself before the whole roof fell in.

There was one vast blaze upward ; a tremendous crash ; a suffocating smoke rolling in volumes round ; and then, for the moment, the fury of the fire seemed to abate. Silence succeeded—silence of the exhausted element, and silence of awe among the assembled multitude. Nothing was heard but the thick falling of the streams from the fire-engines, which had played upon the ruins with considerable effect.

The poor bewildered master of the hotel, who was a Frenchman, had been running about like one distracted, tearing his hair, and giving vent to his desperation in terms and gestures which, in one of our more sober nation, would have appeared almost theatrical.

But when the helpless bodies of these two lovely young women were brought down he gave way to a burst of agony, which not the loss of the whole of his property could have called forth ; and it was with the tears running in torrents down his cheeks that he received the lifeless forms ; their beautiful heads drooping like dying lilies, their hair floating round their young and slender forms, and their eyes closed.

“Dead ! dead !—quite—quite dead !” exclaimed the pitying bystanders.

CHAPTER LVII.

Pack clouds away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow ;
Sweet air, blow soft—mount, larks, aloft,
To give my love Good morrow.

HEYWOOD.

“NONSENSE ! no such thing, good people !” cried a pert, vulgar, bustling coxcomb of a young man, hurrying forward.

A young surgeon he was, and in the worst style ; as, I suppose, you would have said.

But he was a clever, intelligent, active, and moreover, a very humane young fellow, nevertheless.

Yes, such things *are* possible.

“Nonsense! only asphyxia!—not dead at all—the smoke. Give them air; dash cold water in their faces; keep the crowd off, policeman, will you? Sir,” to a young man standing by, “water in God’s name!”

Choking, gasping, struggling painfully for life, awakening slowly as from some horrid dream, recollection slowly returned.

They opened their eyes. Where were they?

Laid upon the same bed, side by side, and soon clasped in each other’s arms.

They cried a long time.

Augusta has returned to Donnington.

You would scarcely know her again, she looks so much better—she has recovered her usual cheerfulness; her step is as elastic, her face bright as ever.

She is sitting at a small sofa-table opposite to Mrs. Darby—and the table is covered over with those little green and white boxes full of cotton-wool, so interesting in the eyes of the lovers of trinkets.

They are selecting ornaments for the wedding.

Augusta is very difficult to please; nay, quite unreasonable, and most unusually critical. She is not naturally inclined to any foolish extravagance in these things; but upon this occasion she seems to think nothing too expensive, and scarcely any thing handsome enough.

Mrs. Darby appears altogether of the same opinion, but this is less remarkable, because that lady is habitually fond of fine things.

A young man, with a blue bag in his hand, is standing at the lower end of the room; the assortment of jewelery being so valuable, that Messrs. Storr and Mortimer have chosen to send a clerk down with them.

Messrs. Storr and Mortimer made a good job of that morning’s work. Miss Darby laid out some thousand pounds for bridal ornaments, as I have been told.

Angela is in London.

She does not look quite so well at ease as Miss Darby; she has a trembling, nervous hand; and her cheek is very changeable; and

her eyes have got a trick of looking down, as if the eyelids were heavy.

She is sitting in Miss Grant's boudoir; and Joan is, contrary to her usual habits, very busy with a *modiste* of much repute, and various artists of the like description, regulating an outfit for India.

For, after all the ups and downs, and revolutions of her fate, it has been determined, by general consent, that Miss Nevil shall be shipped off for India.

To be provided with a husband, no doubt?

No such thing; the husband is already provided.

She had saved her life; and almost, for her sake, lost her own.

Augusta we know had a heart, as well as an imagination of fire.

It was the imagination which so long had triumphed and made her the miserable captive of Vavasour; it was now the turn of the heart to speak, and the malignant charm was dissipated in a moment.

Her eyes were unscaled, her will set free; the heart, the good heart, spoke once more.

It was now her turn to feel grateful, to reverse the picture, and restore what she had taken away.

It was quite curious and most comfortable to behold how easily, after all, she did it—

And restored her Carteret to his Angela.

But they would not take her money; that could not be done—and all the generous feeling in the world could not alter the fact that Lord Missenden was miserably poor.

There is, however, a remedy for every thing but death; and in this blessed country of ours great people find it very easy, indeed, to put clever people in the way of taking care of themselves.

Edward was, you know, filling an eminent situation in India, and to please Joan Grant, independently of every other consideration in the world, he was but too glad to invite Mr. Vavasour to join him, and to undertake an office then vacant, which he was particularly well qualified to fill, and which was eminently calculated to atone to him for the injustice of fortune; or rather, of his father's extravagance.

The dark and miserable days which he had passed since his return to England had not been wasted upon Vavasour.

On sensible and earnest minds the teachings of suffering are not

wasted—the great business of moral education, for which the mysterious machinery of the world appears to be constructed, advances rapidly under the sharp discipline of mental pain.

In his solitary walks in that isolation which the young heart feels when severed forever from the object of an honest and first passion, his mind turned inward, and reflected seriously upon itself. With a feeling amounting to dismay he looked back upon the years that were passed, and upon the prospect before him; upon the indolent, imaginative, undirected life he had been living—a life without object and without seriousness—upon the barren waste which to his disappointed heart the future presented, when no longer stimulated or rendered happy by love.

And he felt ashamed and humbled.

Then the responsibilities, the duties, imposed upon him; his high faculties, his infinitely noble destiny as a human being, presented themselves with an aspect till then new; and his views of things, his impulses and his intentions, were changed.

He longed for labor, and not for enjoyment; for serious purpose rather than vain imaginations; for business, not pleasure; for the cultivation of good rather than that of beauty.

In this mood, that sudden revolution of events which restored him to the being so thoroughly esteemed and so devotedly loved, found him—and emancipated him at once from those intricacies of feeling which had forced him, as it were, into the fulfillment of his engagement with Miss Darby—strange as it may appear to most young men—to be emancipated from the burden of her fortune was almost an equal boon to being emancipated from herself.

His heart was burning for energetic action; and in the opportunity presented by Edward, he hailed not only the means of honorably restoring his family to affluence, but, what was to him far more precious, the means of honorably and usefully employing those powers with which he felt himself to be endowed.

There was a very happy wedding. The people invited went to St. George's—there was quite a string of splendid carriages; and the footmen had favors as big as peonies, and each a silver acorn in the center.

Miss Darby and Miss Grant, I must tell you, made the wedding between them—I ought to say, furnished it, with feast, clothes, jewels, equipages; and they did it right splendidly and well.

I wish you could have seen Miss Darby dressing Angela upon the wedding morning—so busy and so merry, so full of spirits and fun; Angela, amid all this affection, quite beside herself with happiness.

Then the breakfast! I love good things, and I like a very gay wedding; and a capital feast, in my opinion, is indispensable upon all joyous occasions.

There was enough to employ Gunter for a week, and Gunter did it in his very best style. The things were, of course, beautiful, and as good as beautiful, which is not always the case with confectionary not made at home. Science has put its finger into our puddings and pies, I am sorry to say; and there are certain scientific substitutes for lemons, &c., which make the Old Man sigh after other days,

Much was the eating, the talking, the laughing, the drinking of healths, and the returning of thanks.

Many the speeches, and ill they were done, but who cared?

Every body was so content and happy.

Even to Lady Missenden herself, who could not make a face at the heroic girl who had risked her own to save Augusta Darby's life.

Miss Grant, you know, had a touch of the utilitarian in her composition, and her taste was very simple in these things; but Miss Darby would have it her own way, and I never saw such a wedding!

I believe there were eight bridesmaids in white, and pink, and silver—all very pretty girls, but not to be compared to the bride. She really looked so infinitely lovely in her myrtle flowers, and long Brussels veil thrown over her head, &c., that I never saw the like, as Dean Swift says.

Mr. O'Hara was groom's man, and he was never better pleased in his life than when he saw the knot safely tied between Mr. Vavasour and Miss Nevil.

There was a dance in the evening at Mr. Darby's, and how he did waltz and polka with Miss Darby!

And she as merry and as happy all the time as if she had never dreamed a foolish love-dream in her life.

You may marry them, if you will, or let it alone, as you like; though it is my firm belief that in due time they were married.

Angela made with her husband the overland voyage to India, where they both safely arrived.

Nurse and the children were, at Miss Darby's earnest entreaties, intrusted to her.

She rattled up the boys, and had a very nice young governess for the girl; and in due time sent the boys to the best school she could hear of, and spared neither expense nor pains upon their education. They went to Addiscombe, did themselves very great credit, and are at this writing doing extremely well in India too.

Edward, covered with honors and descending into the vale of years, but just at the beginning of that long, wearisome descent, however, at length returned to England.

It is to me a beautiful sight (let the world laugh if it choose), when, in the evening of their day, those whom time has long held asunder unite at last in a holy friendship, though the day of love is past.

In this instance the friendship cemented by long esteem—by all the tender associations which endear the declining years of those who have known and loved each other from childhood—was strengthened by the strong and mutual interest both took in the same important objects—in the diffusion of happiness, and in the promotion of truth and righteousness.

Separated for so large a portion of life, they met as they advanced toward the threshold of eternity, mutually to cheer and solace those declining hours, when the world with its vain pleasures fades away, and the days are coming in which it shall be said, "There is no pleasure in them."

Edward came home, though not much enriched in purse, yet loaded with well-earned honors, the recompense of what he had done in those vast regions to assist in clearing away obstructions and forwarding the reign of justice and humanity—that sacred reign, which his countrymen have there certainly, if imperfectly, begun; he returned, esteemed and honored by all, and with a name that would hold its place in the history of both hemispheres.

He had long been a solitary man; but he had married early in life, and it was his son who finally inherited Widdrington.

I need not tell you how long Joan lived there in honor, or how Angela and Carteret, in India, pursued the footsteps he had marked out, and labored earnestly and well.

Much has been done; but we are but at the outset there. That vast empire seems, by the blessing of the Almighty, to be destined to be the first grand example of the force of righteousness, justice,

and peace ruling upon the earth, and of conquests not alone to be achieved by the sword.

It is but the dawn; but see you not the day breaking, and the clouds of prejudice, error, and misrule clearing away?

See you not the Sun of Righteousness arising in the East with healing in His wings? Hear you not, by anticipation, the glad voice of enlightened and rejoicing nations?

THE END.

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